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LETTERS

ADDRESSED TO

YOUNG PERSON IN INDIA;

CALCULATED

TO AFFORD INSTRUCTION FOR HIS CONDUCT

IN GENERAL,

AND MORE ESPECIALLY

HIS INTERCOURSE WITH THE NATIVES.

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BY

LIEUT. COL. JOHN BRIGGS,

LATE RESIDENT AT SATARA.

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PREFACE.

In presenting the following Letters to the public, the author's chief motive has been to render himself useful to the service in which the period of his youth and manhood has been principally spent. The Letters were composed in India, and the originals, written in the confidence of friendship, contained many observations on systems, and remarks on individuals, which the author has endeavoured to suppress or to soften down as much as was consistent with the object in view, viz. that of imparting information on almost every point which appeared likely to be useful to the novice on his first entrance into India.

In attempting to modify the correspondence, much of the freshness of the first letters has necessarily evaporated. A want of originality is here and there apparent, and an air of tautology is occasionally given, in consequence of the same subject being touched on in different letters. Of these imperfections the author was not fully aware till he came to correct the proof sheets, when no

remedy for the evil remained but either to suppress the publication altogether, or to cast the whole into a tract on the manners and customs of the Hindoos. On mature reflection, however, he resolved to allow the Letters to stand as they are, and to trust to the public for indulgence in consideration of the motives which induced him to print them. He is convinced that no better mode than the present could be adopted to attract the juvenile reader, and his object has been to endeavour to impart much instruction in a small compass, and to be amusing in the discussion of topics possessing little general interest to the European reader.

The Letters, though not dated, embrace a period of some years, during which the individual to whom they are addressed is supposed to have passed into different offices in the civil service, and advantage is taken of his ignorance, in the early part of his career, to introduce a series of letters written to a military officer.

As the mind and the views of the young civilian expand, it will be perceived that the Letters assume a graver tone, and quitting the minutiæ of forms and habits, to which he by degrees becomes familiar, topics of a more important nature are treated of, in which legislation and policy are discussed, and opinions founded on practical experience are freely compared with theory.

The author is aware on what delicate ground he is treading when canvassing such weighty questions; but influenced by a desire of being useful, he has ventured to adopt maxims in some instances at variance with the sentiments of some of the most eminent of our Oriental statesmen, for whose judgment and reputation he has the greatest respect. The conviction of the truth of the opinions contained in these Letters, has derived strength from a continued residence in the East; and although they may not be entitled to much consideration, on account of the source whence they emanate, yet they may tend to throw new light on some subjects, and to lead to discussions by persons more competent to the task than the author professes to be.

The anecdotes interspersed throughout the work are founded on facts, many of the events having occurred within the author's own knowledge, and almost all within the time of his residence in India. If the picture in any one of them has been highly coloured, it was done with the view of impressing more fully on the pupil's mind the dangerous consequences to be apprehended by the pursuit of that line of conduct from which it was intended to warn him.

In the general opinion formed of the natives, and of the policy and necessity of consideration towards all classes of them by their European rulers, the author is not singular. The maxims so strongly

inculcated by Sir John Malcolm in his Instruction on this head are in perfect unison with the sentiments of the most eminent of our Indian statesmen. One and all lament the degradation of the better classes, and deprecate that levelling system which would reduce the whole population to the condition of mere serfs of the soil; a system supposed by some to be calculated to secure our dominion if successfully and generally adopted, but one alike derogatory and impolitic. Derogatory, as abandoning every principle of justice and liberality; impolitic, as tending to create universal dislike to our rule, and gradually to diminish the resources of India, by rendering the people a nation of paupers, equally incapable of raising articles for exportation as of purchasing the imports of Europe. A brighter æra for India it is to be hoped is at hand. More information on the subject of her condition, her institutions, her learning, and her people, is daily pouring in upon us; and there is little doubt that the enlightened rulers of that vast empire will every day more and more see the justice, the policy, and I may add the absolute necessity, of permitting the native community to participate more largely in the administration of the government.

LETTERS,

ETC.

LETTER I.

Satàra.

MY DEAR GEORGE,

My last letters from England acquaint me that you are actually to quit your native shores for India, as a writer, about the beginning of next year, when you will be nineteen. Charles was only sixteen when he left home, and although he is getting on as well as I could wish, yet I am of opinion it would have been better had he remained three or four years longer. When he arrived, he was a mere school-boy, he had mixed very little with strangers, and it was impossible to say how he would turn out. On board ship, feeling himself for the first time his own master, he was led into gambling, and lost so much money, that had there not been fortunately some one to assist him when

he reached India, I hardly know how he would have joined his regiment. Out of the hundred pounds with which he embarked, he had scarcely twenty left on his arrival; and being in the cavalry, where the dress and accoutrements are so expensive, he was obliged to borrow a sum equal to what he had lost at the gaming table. It is scarcely two years since he landed, during which time he has evinced repentance, by not only repaying what he borrowed, but has also made such progress in the acquirement of the language and of the knowledge of his duty, that my friend, Colonel C * * * has promised to recommend him for the first vacant staff appointment in his regiment. I hope Charles's misfortune will be a warning to you, and prevent your falling into a similar dilemma. You have, however, associated so much more with full-grown young men, and have enjoyed so much more liberty, that I trust there is little danger of your being easily led away to do any thing so palpably imprudent. Rely on it, nothing so certainly deprives a man of his independence, and saps the foundation of honourable principle, as pecuniary embarrassment brought on by extravagance.

With regard to your outfit, I should think little information can be necessary to your father, since he has so lately sent out Charles, who most probably mentioned in his letters home in what articles his supply was deficient. You should by all

means bring whatever you may require here with you, for a rupee, though nominally valued at two shillings, only purchases in India what one shilling will do in England: I allude of course to European manufactures. You should have linen and light summer clothing to last you for at least four months. A swinging cot is better than a mahogany couch, because the latter is expensive, and both are useless in India. As you will probably have a cabin to yourself, or at all events part of one, a small table containing a wash-hand basin, a chair, and a common chest of drawers, should comprise all your furniture. What clothes cannot be contained in the drawers might be kept in a common sea-chest, to be put below, but at hand, and a small trunk containing such books as you may wish to read during the voyage, should be in your cabin. Every thing else which you do not require at sea, ought to be packed in common deal cases lined with tin. You should bring with you a box of saddlery, containing either one or two saddles, with spare furniture, and a few pair of boots, shoes, and gloves. You will find it convenient to leave your measure with your tradesmen in London, in case you may wish to have clothes sent out to you, although I dare say you will find Indian tailors to suit you, unless you are very particular in your dress, an object however to which all young men should attend. Bring all your college books, and I entreat you not to aban-

don either your classics or your French. On board ship, you will have abundance of time for study, and I know of no better employment than making yourself master, as far as is practicable, of Indian history.

We know nothing of the Hindoos before the invasion and conquest of the country in the eleventh century by the Mahomedans, who, from that period till the seventeenth, are our only guides. It is melancholy to think, that out of a vast mass of historical information, compiled by that enterprising race, so little has been handed down to posterity, and that that little even remains hidden from us, in the obscurity of the oriental tongues. Ferishta, who lived in the beginning of the seventeenth century, compiled a voluminous history of all the Mahomedan kingdoms and principalities of India, some portions of which have been translated by Colonels Dow and Scott at different periods; but the incomplete manuscripts they consulted, and the ignorance which prevailed, till lately, of the geography of the East, combine to render their labours of little use. It is to be wished that a new translation were made of the whole, and such a work has been, I believe, nearly completed; but from the small interest excited by oriental literature among all persons but those resident in India, I fear the translator will be unable to publish the result of his undertaking. For the present, therefore, you can ex-

pect to gain little information regarding Indian history, anterior to the period of the Portuguese, in 1498. The account of their conquests is accessible in some degree, through the introduction to Mickle's Lusiad; but a tolerably good notion of the events connected with the court of the Great Mogul (as we call him), may be obtained by a perusal of the travels of Bernier, the memoirs of Eradut Khan, in the second volume of Scott's history of the Deccan, a translation of the Seêur-i-Mootâkhireen rendered into English, from the Persian language, by a French gentleman about forty years ago*, Franklin's history of Shâh Alum, and the early part of the Marratta history, lately published by Captain Grant Duff. These works treat of the history of the natives chiefly. With regard to our own conquests, abundant information in the most instructive and entertaining shape, is to be found in Orme's Transactions of the English in India, from the year 1745 to 1761, a continuation of which, by

* This work was printed many years ago in Calcutta, and the proof copy is in the Bombay library. It contains a great deal of interesting information, and is doubly valuable, as it forms a narrative by an Indian of transactions with which the English are intimately connected. I am not aware that the translation was ever printed in Europe, but it is much to be regretted that it is so little known or read.

Colonel Wilks, is brought down to 1800; and the latter volumes of Grant Duff's history, together with the works published by Sir John Malcolm, Sir Stamford Raffles, Crawford and Prinsep, bring the narrative down to the end of the Marquess of Hastings's administration. I trust I need hardly say, that you will feel little inducement to prosecute these studies, unless you consult a good map, and make it a point to ascertain the position of every place mentioned. The necessity for this practice has of course been so fully instilled into you at school, that I hope it will not now be neglected. Should you read but half of what I have mentioned, with attention, you will have acquired, before you reach India, more information, and feel more interest towards its inhabitants, than a very large portion of the Europeans who reside there.

If your time admit of it, after the receipt of this letter, I should advise your spending some months in travelling on the continent of Europe: this will accustom you to intercourse with foreigners, and render you less likely to meet the natives of this country with repugnance.

You should quit England for India between the months of December and April. The quickest passages are make by the ships sailing early in March, the pleasantest, perhaps, by those sailing in all January. I shall be unable to meet you on your ar-

rival, but will take care to insure you a kind and hospitable reception among my friends.

Charles was quite well when I last heard from him, a fortnight since.

Yours, etc.

LETTER II.

Satâra.

MY DEAR GEORGE,

I HAVE received your letter announcing your arrival, but I have not yet got the letters you brought with you, nor is it likely that I shall, for the gentleman to whose care you intrusted them, is gone in another direction, and may not be here for a month, if so soon. I should have thought you had been long enough in the world to know that the most secure and expeditious mode of transmiting letters at all times, is through the post-office, and the gratification we derive from our European correspondence in this land of exile, cannot be purchased at too dear a rate.

You do not mention with which of my friends you are residing, for I conclude that some of them will afford you accommodation during your stay at the presidency, which I hope may not be very long. Your brother Charles, after passing a very creditable examination in the Hindoostany language, has been now appointed interpreter to his regiment; and as he qualified himself for military surveying, before he left England, he will, I hope, some of these days, make his way either in that branch of the service,

or in the quarter-master-general's department, to either of which he is by this qualification eligible, in addition to the other staff appointments open to the whole army.

I shall be glad to hear what progress you made in your oriental studies (of the languages I mean) at Hertford, and also whether you followed my advice, by adopting the course of reading I recommended on board ship. With respect to the languages, you will soon find that nothing can be done without them; indeed this point is now so well established, that one of the regulations of government expressly states, that no civilian shall be deemed eligible to fill any appointment till he has passed an examination in at least one Indian language. The veil that exists between us and the natives can only be removed by mutual and kind intercourse. It has long been found inconvenient to trust to native interpreters for the transaction of business, and indeed it was impossible, as long as that system prevailed, that we could obtain any real acquaintance with the people and their character. The period to which I allude has fortunately long passed away; and I believe hardly an instance now exists of any European holding a civil situation of responsibility removed from the presidencies, who is ignorant of the language of the district in which he resides. This acquisition, therefore, is by no means a matter of choice; it is essential to your pro-

gress in the service, and it is probable, if after two or three years a young man should be found obstinate in refusing to apply himself to that point, the government would recommend his being altogether removed from a profession, the duty of which he persisted in remaining incompetent to fulfil. I am sure you have too much pride and good sense to require to be urged on this subject; and indeed I know of very, very few instances of young men so absurd as to neglect it, though of course all are not equally diligent or equally capable of learning. I conceive six months of close application, in a country where the language is spoken, sufficient to acquire a tolerably competent acquaintance with the colloquial part; and any young man of ordinary capacity ought to pass a creditable examination in a year from the time he begins, after which the current business of his office, and the intercourse he maintains with the people, will render him in another year qualified to translate any document with ease to himself, and to transact business with facility. So you see how much I expect from you.

Yours, etc.

LETTER III.

Satâra.

MY DEAR GEORGE,

I THINK you have been in too great a hurry to commence housekeeping. Neither you nor your chum have yet been a month in India, and as I hope there is a prospect of your proceeding into the interior of the country, I cannot say I think it very prudent in you to quit Mr. M.'s house, where you were residing comfortably, and entertaining an establishment of new servants with probably very unsatisfactory recommendations. Servants in all countries have it greatly in their power to contribute to our comforts as well as to impose on us, and even sometimes to inflict on us positive distress, and this must be particularly the case in a strange land like this. I would recommend your procuring of one man of respectability. By treating him kindly, and by employing him in the first instance to entertain other servants, you will find many difficulties vanish which may appear formidable at first sight. In travelling it is from this person that you will be compelled to obtain all the information you require, and as there are no inns on the road you must carry every thing along with you. When Charles arrived,

I had occasion to write him many letters on the subject of his intercourse with the natives, which contain information that may also be useful to you. Charles was then considerably younger than you are now, and he laboured under disadvantages from which you are exempt. Like most young Englishmen, he was much prejudiced against the people of India, and in his early letters he was in the habit of designating them by appellations which I will not repeat, and which he has since renounced, or he would never have been interpreter in his regiment. But he was young, thoughtless, and imprudent. He got into the hands of bad servants, who, after provoking him by their conduct, and irritating him to beat them (as he has since confessed to me with shame), not only deserted but robbed him into the bargain. He has since candidly confessed that both he and his associates had no mercy on the servants. They quite forgot, or in fact never knew, that after these men had walked the whole distance of each journey without food, it became necessary for them not only to go to the shops in the town and purchase each article, but that they had also to make a fire, and prepare their own meals, after which, if they had travelled, as is usually the case, during the night, they also required sleep. Their masters were no sooner fed, than they instantly required their domestics to accompany them over the fields under a scorching sun to seek for

game; and many an angry word and sundry cuffs and blows did these unhappy people endure before they absconded. Charles's loss consisted of a few bottles of wine, but one of his brother officers lost his watch and the few articles of plate which he had purchased to bring out with him from England.

Yours, etc.

LETTER IV.

Satâra.

MY DEAR GEORGE,

It is quite time you should read my letters to Charles, and I hope soon to be able to send them. I can less easily excuse you than him, for abusing the natives as a whole race, whom you designate by the absurd appellation of "black fellows." I really expected more liberality from a young man of nineteen, who had spent two years at college, under such eminent gentlemen as some of the professors at Hertford. Is it because nature has dyed the skin of the people of tropical regions with a darker hue than those situated more remotely from the equator, that it should be matter of reproach to them? You must endeavour to get over this antipathy to their colour, if it really exists, though I blush to think that it does. Before you can render yourself useful as a public functionary, you must bring your mind to view the inhabitants of this country merely as strangers, differing indeed from us in almost all their habits, in their manners, in their language, and in their religion, but not deficient in many excellent qualities nor in talent. But to return to the appellation "black fellow",

indefinitely made use of towards all natives of the East, and I am ashamed to say, too frequently used by persons who can neither plead youth nor inexperience in excuse. I shall not stop to inquire how this epithet becomes synonymous with reproach, but we know it is usually intended to convey an idea of all that is base, and is only applied in that sense. You should recollect that virtue and talents of the very highest order have not been denied to those nations now indiscriminately called "black fellows", in which nearly all the natives of Asia and Africa are commonly included. The whole race of Egypt (the cradle of science) were literally black. Hannibal, Asdrubal, Juba, and the Carthaginians, were black. The Mahomedan conquerors of Spain, who held that country in subjection for six centuries, and threatened the conquest of Europe, were black. To the black Saracens of the Arabian deserts we owe much of our modern science and civilization, and there is sufficient reason to believe that, in the vast mass of unexplored Sanscrit literature in India, an almost inexhaustible mine of curious and interesting information and of beautiful imagery lies hidden from us, owing as much to our repugnance to associate with black men, as to the difficulty of acquiring so copious a dead language. From the astronomical tables brought to Europe in 1687, and at subsequent periods, on which M. Bayfli, the celebrated mayor of Paris, and Professor Play-

fair have written learned essays, it is almost certain that at a period long anterior to the Christian æra the natives of this country had attained a degree of perfection and accuracy in the practical part of the science of astronomy, unknown to Europeans till within the last two centuries. It is equally certain, that in the East, and perhaps even in India itself, originated our own planetary system. Our present method of calculating time by weeks, months, and solar years, was introduced into Europe, so late only as in the age of Julius Cæsar, whereas it is demonstrable that the practice has prevailed in India beyond the times of historical record.

While on this subject I will just relate a circumstance which happened some years ago, connected with the epithet "black fellow", which ought to make you blush. You are aware that the art of ship building has attained, under the conduct of natives alone, a degree of perfection which enables it to bear a fair comparison with the same art in England. The entire construction of vessels had been for many years conducted in Bombay under one Jemsejee, a native Parsee, who, from being a common ship-carpenter, rose to become master builder in the Company's dock yard; and in the year 1800 the first frigate built of teak for his Majesty's service was launched into her proper element. The vessel had been built solely by natives, and was a proud specimen of the perfection they had

attained in their art. During the preparations for the launch, to which the governor and all the naval officers of his Majesty's service were invited, it is said Jemsejee having walked once or twice around the vessel, and elated at her completion in so good style, determined to commemorate the event, which he did in the following manner. Having gone quietly below into the ship's hold, he caused these remarkable words to be carved on the inside on her kelson:—"This ship was built by a d——d black fellow, A.D. 1800." The circumstance was unknown for some years afterwards, until the vessel was brought into dock, and Jemsejee mentioned the fact, and pointed out the inscription.

In 1810, the Minden, 74, was built by the same person. After her arrival in England, she underwent a minute examination at Portsmouth by a committee appointed for the purpose, when a splendid vase, with a model of the ship forming the handle of the cover, was presented to Jemsejee by the Lords of the Admiralty, and a very handsome complimentary letter was also written, which is preserved in his family. Since that period several line-of-battle ships have been constructed by natives, in the Bombay docks, for his Majesty's navy, on the latest and most approved principles. In the year 1820, the Bombay government recommended to the favourable notice of the court of directors, a memorial of Jemsejee's, for a small tract of waste

land as a family estate, but he died before a reply was received. On his death-bed, however, he addressed a letter to the government in India, praying that it would, on its own responsibility, pledge itself that the land should be granted, which, in consequence of the long and faithful services of this meritorious public officer, was acceded to, and he died in full confidence that his son would succeed to the estate, as he has since done.

If a common carpenter, by his exertions, could thus raise himself to distinction, you may conclude there are many men among the upper classes who deserve our consideration. At each of the Presidencies are numbers of opulent and respectable native merchants, who keep their carriages, and spend handsome fortunes. Many of them are owners of large ships, which carry trade to all parts of the world, and officers of the British navy even are not ashamed to command them. In the interior of the country, in all the principal cities and towns, you will find bankers and agents who carry on extensive money transactions over most part of India, and some whose connexions enable them to give letters of credit and recommendation, which would carry a traveller all over the globe. I merely mention these facts to shew you that the Indian community is by no means in that low state of barbarism in which you have been induced to think it.

You will discover, also, as you proceed through

the service, that without the assistance of the natives, in whom every man of business must place more or less confidence, the Europeans would be totally helpless; and it is to our conciliatory behaviour alone that we must ascribe our peaceable occupation of the country. Fortunately, both for us and for them, very young men, or those ignorant of their manners and customs, are allowed to possess little authority. The constitution of the Indian government, both at home and abroad, is so formed, that a population of many millions, divided into numerous castes, although governed directly by Europeans, is ruled only by persons in the service; by which apprenticeship they become members of a sort of caste themselves, and it is not till the civil and military servants are sufficiently qualified, that they can hold any office of trust or importance. For such is the nature of our tenure of India, that the government cannot risk any great charge in unskilful hands, while sinecure offices are almost unknown.

Every thing therefore depends on a young man's own exertions, and you may rely on it where there is talent, a time will come, sooner or later, when his services will be required and he must be employed.

Yours, etc.

LETTER V.

Satâra.

MY DEAR GEORGE,

I NOW send you the promised letters. The first alludes principally to the objects which must strike every European, landing from shipboard, as incongruous and strange. I have in that letter endeavoured to reconcile Charles to the novelty of the scene, and to account in some measure for his feeling more repugnance than an English traveller does in passing over the continent of Europe, and have also given some account of the natives in general.

The second letter refers to arrangements for travelling, as also to an unfortunate accident which happened to Charles in being robbed and deserted by his servants, on his road to join his regiment, to which I have before alluded in one of my letters to you. As I then mentioned, much of this arose out of his own imprudence, and, as he himself confessed, out of his ill-conduct. The occurrence referred to is by no means unfrequent, and I hope you will avoid the danger by hiring the head man you now have. Although you will require more servants than in England when you

keep house, yet you will find them not inferior to those of your native country, and infinitely better calculated for your purpose than any Europeans you could have. Indeed I have heard gentlemen who have lived for many years in England declare, that on the whole their Indian servants have afforded them more comfort by their fidelity, intelligence, cleanliness, and regularity, than any they ever had. But the excellence of domestics depends so much on the character and conduct of masters themselves, that it is extremely difficult to say where the best servants are to be met with, though, you may rely on it, that by kind and liberal treatment the Indians are capable of becoming as good ones as any in the world; a conclusion which every person who has resided long among them will assuredly arrive at.

The third letter commences with a short epitome of Indian history, and after describing cursorily the several parts of the Indian society, with the peculiarities of each, I have endeavoured to give some account of the men of whom our army is composed, and have concluded with some remarks on the general character of our native soldiery.

The fourth letter treats particularly of the conduct of a military officer to his men, and of the importance of studying attentively their character and habits.

These letters are addressed to a younger man

than yourself, and much of the matter which I have dwelt on with emphasis in addressing him will, I trust, not be so necessary for you. Those portions of the letters alluding to military subjects I would willingly have passed over had I transcribed them, but you must take them as they are, and if I should have repeated in my letters with you, what I have already expressed to him, you must refer it to the importance I attach to those particular points. On the whole, however, I hope you will find many useful hints in them, and much information that it will be unnecessary for me to repeat in my future correspondence, which I promise to continue if I find you disposed to avail yourself of it, and to impart such observations as my experience may furnish me with.

I am glad you have a moonshy, and I conjure you, by all your hopes of success in the service, to apply diligently and patiently to your studies.

Yours, etc.

LETTER VI.

Satára.

"MY DEAR CHARLES,

"I RECEIVED your letter announcing your arrival in India, an event on which I sincerely congratulate you. The scene now open to you in the world on which you have just entered, is entirely new, full of interest, but not devoid of danger and difficulties. I consider, therefore, that it may be useful to you to have some advice for your conduct, from one who has passed the ordeal, and has purchased his knowledge through a long and not inactive servitude of twenty-six years.

"Young men who enter the Indian army as cadets are peculiarly situated. They at once join regiments composed of foreigners, to whose language and habits they are entire strangers, who form a class of men remarkable for superstitious attention to habits, and bigoted attachment to the manners and religious ceremonies of their ancestors. Among these people the European officer is probably destined to pass the greater part of his life; and one of the first objects of his duty, as regards himself individually, as well as the men to be placed under his command, must be to acquire their language, and to become familiar with their customs.

" Indian cadets are usually like yourself, youths from sixteen to eighteen years of age, who have seen very little of the world, and know nothing beyond what they have acquired at the schools in which they have been educated. It is not surprising, therefore, to find, that on their first arrival they are struck with astonishment at all they see, nor that they should at first dislike, and become even disgusted with the habits of nations so essentially different from their own. In addition to these circumstances, there is another feeling which, in India, tends to create a contempt towards the natives, and however absurd the notion, it is nevertheless true, that their dark complexions convey to the mind of an European a sensation of inferiority. It is a well-known fact, that most of the barbarous nations in the universe, and the savages found on the several islands discovered by modern navigators, are dark, and that the unhappy and debased slaves conveyed from the western coast of Africa are also black. From this circumstance, which renders them the objects of commiseration, probably arises the contempt we feel for men of that colour, and which leads us to consider them as a degraded race, whose minds are incapable of energy, or of the nobler passions of mankind. This prejudice, so commonly prevalent among Europeans towards all dark men, makes us too apt to identify fairness of complexion with intellectual powers and civilization, and to as-

sociate with the term "black man" the idea of barbarism and brutality.

"These notions are usually brought to India by every cadet, and they frequently receive confirmation by an association with the officers of the ship, who see and know little of the natives of India in general. Their intercourse is confined to those interested and mercenary individuals abounding at sea-ports in every part of the world, and who, feeding on the necessities and ignorance of sea-faring men, make unfavourable impressions on their minds of the whole nation. Yet it would not be more unfair in a foreigner to judge of the whole English people by the casual communication he maintains with the boatmen and others concerned in clearing ships at Liverpool, Blackwall, or Portsmouth, than to draw unfavourable conclusions of the Hindoo race from the specimens which an Englishman sees of the natives of Calcutta, Madras, or Bombay. There is, however, an additional reason why a person arriving from on ship-board should, on his first landing in this country, be more shocked with every strange object he sees, than a traveller would be in Europe. In the latter case, although he meets with great varieties of dress, of mode of worship, and of manners, yet there is a general similarity to what he has always been accustomed. For instance, though the costumes in Europe vary, still there is no absolute nakedness, such as strikes every person

on arriving in India. This is observable at Madras in particular, where, with the exception of a small strip of linen round his girdle, and a sharp-pointed scull-cap made of leaves fitting the head, the men in the canoes are absolutely naked. To a European the sight is hardly human, to see a black animal kneeling on three bits of wood, connected only with the fibres of the cocoa-nut, paddling away alone several miles from land. Yet, strange to say, these men, on their rude skiffs, pass through a tremendous surf on the coast, into which no English seaman or English boat dare venture. The natives, however, fearlessly attend the country boats, filled frequently with European passengers, in order to save their lives, and they encounter night and day, not only the risk of drowning, but the more serious chance of being carried away by sharks, to which animals many of them frequently fall victims. As rewards for their services, however, we see these naked Indians adorned with medals, presented by government for their brave exertions in saving the lives of shipwrecked persons, of which they are justly as proud as any military and naval heroes who may have fought for their king and country.

" In Europe the climate everywhere requires that the human body should be clothed, which is by no means necessary in India. Religion too, though it assumes various forms among the numerous sects of Protestants, Roman Catholics, &c.

and the disciples of the Greek Church; still none of these differences shock us by their extravagances. We have in some degree become familiar to them by our education; and in the course of passing from one country to another, a traveller in Europe becomes gradually introduced to the novelties which occur on his journey. With regard to customs too, though in some respects different, yet there is a general similarity preserved throughout the European and Christian nations. The same habit everywhere prevails, of saluting by uncovering the head; of sitting on chairs and couches, of entering houses, and even palaces with shoes, of eating all sorts of flesh, fish, and fowl, and of using knives, forks, and spoons at our meals. All these customs are so common and so universal with us, that when we find the whole of them neglected, we are naturally disposed to think such a people sunk into the lowest state of barbarism. Our surprise is not less than that of an Indian chief who one day asked me if we had abundant rice crops in England, but was surprised to hear that neither rice nor any other of the Indian grains, wheat excepted, grew in England. You will be equally astonished, no doubt, to learn that a great part of a population of a hundred millions of inhabitants, exists, for the most part, without eating wheaten bread, flesh, fish, or fowl, or drinking fermented liquors of any sort. Both the

Indian and the European would very naturally ask of each other, then what is it you do subsist on?

"What then must be the feelings of a person, landing fresh from London, without having witnessed any intermediate state of society between the height of European civilization in the finest city in the universe, and that to which he is so suddenly brought!

"All the several shades of similarity which exist in European society are lost in this hemisphere.

"The climate, as I have already observed, requires the natives to use very little clothing, and the labouring classes consequently hardly use any. The middling and upper classes, instead of being clad in close broad-cloth garments, are habited in long flowing linen robes, giving them, in our eyes, an air of effeminacy. The men shave their heads, both for cleanliness and comfort, and use cotton turbans of various colours instead of hats. These it is rude to take off on any pretence, so that what we do out of courtesy, must to them appear ill-bred. The women have their heads uncovered, and wear their hair after the fashion of the Greeks. The eye-lids of the Mahomedans are tinged with antimony, to give the eyes brilliancy, the complexions of the Hindoos are not unfrequently died yellow with saffron, and the teeth of the Mahomedan females are stained black as ebony after they marry.

" The dryness and the heat of the climate render it unnecessary to use chairs or couches as in Europe. The floors of the rooms of the upper classes are covered with carpets, brocades, or fine linens. Upon these they sit, eat, and lie down; hence the custom throughout the East of taking off the shoes before entering on them, which, soiled by the dirt of the streets, would not only injure the furniture, but also pollute the linen garments in which they are clad. The custom of removing the shoes from off the feet on coming into houses and temples, and on approaching superiors, is very ancient, and a stronger proof of the fact need not be adduced, than by consulting the third chapter of Exodus, when God commands Moses "to put off his shoes, for he stands on holy ground"; and yet, till we become accustomed to this habit, it is extremely repugnant to our feelings to see men walking about our houses with naked feet; and it is the more extraordinary, when we know it is done purely out of respect.

" Let me hear from you, let me know with whom you are residing, and what preparations you are making for your journey into the interior, for the sooner you join your regiment, and quit the sea-port at which you are, the better. On the road, however, as you will find neither stage-coaches, post-chaises, nor inns, it will be necessary you should not only purchase a horse, but be provided with a small camp stock of furniture and supplies.

If you know nothing of horses, which seems likely, take advice on the subject, and by no means purchase an indifferent animal because he happens to be cheap; since the expense of maintaining a bad and a good horse is much the same. You must know also, that on the journey you will meet with none of the conveniences of European travelling, so that it will be requisite to procure the following articles:—a tent; a camp bedstead and bedding complete; a chair and table; boxes for some linen, and others containing plates, knives, forks, and spoons both for breakfast and dinner; and a small quantity of beer and wine in bottles to be packed in hampers, each package to be of such a size as will make half a load for a bullock. Your supplies should consist of bread, biscuit, tea, and sugar, none of which you will be able to procure on the road, for with the exception of milk, butter, fowls, and mutton, at large towns you will find nothing used for food by the natives in common with what we eat. If you can contrive to have some steady companions who have travelled before in India, it will be a great source of comfort to you.

"Yours, etc."

LETTER VII.

Satâra.

" MY DEAR CHARLES,

" THIS is a bad beginning indeed, and although I do not mean to add to your misery by reproaches, yet I cannot help feeling extremely uneasy about you. My only consolation is derived from Mr. M.'s account of your contrition for the past, and your repugnance to borrow money. Eighty pounds is, indeed, a very large sum for a youth of your age to lose at a gaming table; but, I trust, the prudence you evinced in refusing to take your revenge, or rather in risking the loss of the remainder of your money, will prevent your ever getting again into such a scrape.

" There must be something very wrong or very unfortunate in you when your own servants quitted you in the way they have done; and had they not been well recommended, you would probably have shared the same fate as your other two companions, who have been robbed as well as deserted. I dare say, if the truth were known, and I shall hear it some of these days when we meet, that although the servants were not respectable, yet some sub-

stantial cause existed for their abandoning you all at once. I am quite glad to find, however, you fell in with my friend Colonel C * * *, to whom I have written thanking him for his kind attention to you. You had better apply for permission to remain at Poona now, till the 20th regiment marches to Kaira, where yours is stationed; and in the mean time you might get appointed to do duty with the cavalry regiments now at Poona. Your sudden removal from one corps to another at the distance of 500 miles is a little awkward, but the long march with the 20th will afford you an opportunity of seeing the country, and of becoming accustomed to the habits of a camp life; but I request you will not allow your keenness as a sportsman to keep you out all day, either in hunting wild hogs, or in shooting ducks and snipes. I am quite aware how fascinating these sports are to young men, and boar hunting in particular cannot be too much encouraged as a healthy and bold amusement, but great exposure to the vertical sun brings on fever or liver complaints, which are sometimes induced by the quantity of fermented liquors, whether beer, wine, or spirits, that are the usual accompaniments of all sporting parties. I do not wish to discourage you from these manly exercises of the chace, but the gaming and drinking which not unfrequently attend them are to be severely deprecated, and with your scanty experience and tendency to seek

all sort of entertainment, I feel naturally anxious about you.

"Until you join your regiment, I can hardly hope you will be able to do much in the acquirement of the languages. Still you should keep this object in view, and if you can obtain instruction either at Poona or on the road to Kaira, you ought assuredly to avail yourself of it.

"Yours, etc."

LETTER VIII.

Satâra.

" MY DEAR CHARLES,

" You will receive this letter on your arrival at Kaira, where your regiment is quartered, and which I trust you will reach safely without any more adventures. I am much pleased with the style of your last letter, and the very tone of good fellowship which pervades it, when speaking of the men of your troop, induces me to believe that you are already beginning to shake off your prejudices and to think better of the natives. While on this subject, I cannot do better than give you some information of the different castes of Hindoos and Mahomedans, and afford you a notion of the materials of which the native army is composed.

" The continent of India, bounded on the north by Cashmeer, on the east by the Himmalaya mountains, on the west by the river Indus, and embraced on the south by the Indian oceans, is computed to contain somewhat about fifty millions of inhabitants; and previously to the Mahomedan invasion early in the eleventh century, was subdivided into numerous kingdoms and principalities professing the same faith. These people are designated by Euro-

peans, Hindoos, to distinguish them from their conquerors the Mahomedans, who it is supposed now form less than a tenth part of the whole population. The Hindoo power was subverted, it is true, by these conquerors, but the former have preserved their language, their institutions, and their religion, in a manner truly wonderful, so that at the present day there is, in truth, little difference in the character of the Hindoo from the account we have of the race from the earliest ages.

"The Mahomedans continued to hold sway and to increase their conquests for six centuries, when circumstances enabled the Marrattas, a Hindoo nation of the Deccan, to rise on their masters, and during the last century they subverted the empire of the Great Mogul, and established a loose and unconnected government on its ruin. Internal dissensions subsequently shook this ill-constructed pile, and the shock it has received from the British power, within the last twenty or thirty years, has nearly laid the fabric prostrate, and we are now masters of this gigantic edifice. But I shall proceed at once to explain to you the frame of the Indian society. In the first place then, you must know, the Hindoos are subdivided into classes or castes, which have little social or domestic intercourse with each other. The Bramins, or priests, are considered the most pure, and they keep themselves particularly clear from coming in contact with

any other caste. Such is their rigor on this point, that from the mere apprehension of having touched any one of inferior caste, or any impure substance, they are enjoined to bathe before meals, and to eat their food with a single silken robe on, which is considered sufficient to repel the pollution of *noxious shadows*. Their food consists entirely of vegetable substances, with the exception of milk and melted butter, but they are forbidden to taste onions, and they abstain altogether from fermented liquors. So far from being allowed to eat fish, flesh, or fowls, they do not even eat eggs, and they are prohibited from spilling blood, except at some religious sacrifices which are now seldom performed. While eating, within their houses, they sit on small wooden platforms raised from the floor, and when in the open air, they plaister a small spot five or six feet square with cow-dung, on which they both prepare and eat their food. Should any person of another caste step within this purified circle, the victuals become polluted, and must be thrown away.

" The second class is denominated Kshétry. It was composed entirely of the royal race, and though it is now deemed nearly extinct, the Rana of Oody-poor considers his line pure and unpolluted. The Raj-poots or Raj-pootras consider themselves the descendants of the royal race. They pride themselves on their character as soldiers, and certain it is they possess, for the most part, such feelings as

used to belong to the European knights in the days of chivalry, instances of which occur daily. They are fully as particular in their notions of purity as the Bramins, and for the most part use the same food, though they are permitted to eat the flesh of sheep, wild-hogs, deer, and some sort of fish, but no poultry.

" The third class, called Byse, is composed of merchants and artisans. Like the Bramins, this class abstains from animal food, and is equally particular on the score of pollution.

" The fourth class, entitled Shoodr, embraces husbandmen and labourers of all descriptions. These are permitted to eat animal food (beef excepted), but their poverty and the example of the upper classes combine to limit the indulgence.

" There is a fifth class which the others deem outcasts. These are Dehrs Pariahs or Purwaries, as they are indifferently called in different parts of India, who, with the Chambar, or currier, form a part of every village community, but they are not allowed to live within the walls. To these village outcasts, may be added the wandering classes of tank-diggers, poachers, blacksmiths, tin-men, mat-makers, and mountebanks. All these people (who it is supposed by some were the aborigines of the country before the invasion even of the Hindoos) eat every sort of food, and they do not hesitate to feed on reptiles, such as snakes, guanas, jackals,

foxes, land-crabs, frogs, rats, and other vermin. By the pure Hindoos, however, they are deemed so unclean that they are not allowed to touch the person or even the culinary vessels of any other caste. In some parts of India, Bramins consider it necessary to bathe instantly, if the very shadow of an outcast fall on him as he passes, and the house and property of a Bramin would be polluted if entered or touched by one of this class.

" The other great division of Indian society consists of Mahomedans. These people abound in the neighbourhood of Delhi, the ancient capital of the Mogul empire, and in the principality of Lucnow, as also in several parts of Bengal and Malwa. In the south they inhabit the principality of the Nizam, and slender remains of Mahomedan population are to be found in Guzerat, Candeish, Ahmeduceggur, Beejapoor, and most of the chief towns in the Deccan. Besides which some Mahomedans also reside in the territories once subject to the nabobs of Arcot, Masulipatam, Kurnool, Cuddapah, and Mysoor, late the kingdom of Hyder and his son Tippoo, so well known in the British annals of India. Those of the last-mentioned principalities having been subjected by Europeans, and not by the Hindoo power, bear a remarkable antipathy to us, of whose encroachments they are singularly jealous, although the subjects of its rule.

" The greater portion of the Bengal army, whe-

ther infantry or cavalry, is composed of Hindoos, and principally Raj-poots; men possessing the highest sense of military pride, and for whom it is necessary to make great allowances, and to whom considerable indulgences are granted in order to maintain discipline among them; at the same time while managed as they now are by the European officers brought up amongst them, they are inferior in courage or strength to no troops in the world.

"The Madras army is composed of a mixture of Hindoos and Mahomedans. Two-thirds of the former and one-third of the latter class compose the infantry, while the cavalry consists almost entirely of Mahomedans from the towns of Arcot, Madras, and Tritchinopoly. In former times a considerable portion of the Madras infantry consisted of Pariahs, or outcasts, but they were found so exceptionable on some accounts, that they have been forbidden to be enlisted since the year 1806. The character of the Madras army needs no comment; it is sufficient to look at the British annals down to the present day, and it will be found that few wars have been undertaken in India in which its Sepoys have not borne a conspicuous and brilliant part.

"The Bombay army consists of Raj-poots, agricultural Hindoos, and a few outcasts. The latter prove, on all occasions, excellent soldiers, but they do not answer for the rank of native officers, though, by their good conduct in the field, they frequently

merit and obtain that distinction. In the Bombay cavalry are many Mahomedans. This army, till within the last few years, has been very limited in numbers, but has never been deficient in character as compared with those of the sister presidencies. The memory of the brilliant conduct of the grenadier battalion at the siege of Mangalore, in 1784, and the defence made by the second battalion of the same regiment, in 1818, at Corygaum, against the whole of the Peshwa's army, will live as long as the British history of India.—No naval expedition to the gulf of Persia, to the Red Sea, to the shores of Arabia, or to the French Islands was engaged in, without a body of Bombay Sepoys, and on all these occasions they have fought side by side with English soldiers, and have merited the title of comrades.

" You are aware, ere this, that the native officers bearing commissions in our regiments, rise from the ranks, after passing through the different gradations from privates. In the superior rank of soobedar they obtain increased pay, and privileges according to their length of service, and the whole are permitted to retire on pensions when incapacitated from serving by wounds or from old age.

" To each company and troop in the army is appointed one or two European officers, but it seldom happens in time of peace even that one officer is present with each company; and in the field, when

most wanted, the casualties of a single campaign have in some instances reduced the number so considerably, that many of our regiments have been led into action by subalterns, and not unfrequently two or three European officers only have been present to carry the regiment to battle. And yet how well the Sepoys have always behaved!! I question if the best soldiers in the world, so scantily provided with that which composes the sinews of every army (officers), would have maintained their character so well under such disadvantages*.

" The characteristics of the Sepoy are sobriety, cleanliness, obedience, devotion to his European officer when kindly treated, and fidelity to the government he serves. Desertion and mutiny are of rare occurrence, but inattention to their necessities and infringements on their religious prejudices have, on some occasions, driven them to the commission of the greatest atrocities. At such times they are roused to desperation; and equally reckless of life as in the field, they have been known to rise upon their officers and murder them, although certain of suffering condign punishment. The

* A volume might be written on the impolicy and injustice of leaving the native army so scantily supplied with officers; and until their number be rendered at least equal to that of regimental officers in every army of the civilized world, we can never hope or expect that our native army will be effective.

custom of striking soldiers in the ranks is happily discontinued throughout the British army. This habit prevailed to such a degree at one time in our Indian army, I am ashamed to say, that it was difficult to procure recruits, except from among the very lowest classes; and I have known of the most fatal consequences arising out of the practice. It is within my recollection that a captain of a troop of cavalry struck a farrier (a Mahomedan); the man shrunk back, and drawing himself up with indignation said, 'Sir, is this treatment for a soldier? Let me tell you, Sir, I will suffer a blow from no man, nor ever have before.' The blow was repeated with abusive language and kicks. The farrier, who was shoeing a horse at the time, and held the paring instrument in his hand (which in India resembles a sharp but strong sickle) attacked his captain so desperately that he cut him in many places and left him for dead. The man absconded, but was afterwards taken, tried, sentenced to death, and suffered; but he could not be brought to confess that there was guilt in what he had done. It is remarkable that some years afterwards the commanding officer of the same regiment was shot by a trooper while going to the lines. The murderer had suffered some personal injury from his officer, but did not attempt to escape. He gave himself up, pleaded guilty on the trial, and met his fate by declaring he had gratified his revenge, and had

done a public benefit to the regiment by ridding it of a tyrant

" While on the one hand they are alive to injury, and prone to resent ill treatment, whether fancied or real, they are, when kindly used, the most faithful and attached soldiers. Never were these qualities more fully tried than in the war with Hyder. The army was sixteen months in arrears, famine raged all over the country, the enemy was at the gates of Madras, and offering large bounty and pay to our Sepoys to desert, but in vain. Under all these circumstances several severe actions were fought, and in many instances it became necessary to gain the battle, in order to obtain possession of the ground, and the water which the enemy held. Their conduct during that war excited the admiration of all who knew it; and Frederick the Great of Prussia was known to have said, after reading ' Orme's Account of the War in India,' that had he the command of troops who acted like the Sepoys on that occasion, he could conquer all Europe. Although forbidden by their caste to dress their victuals on board ship, when government have required their services, the Sepoys of the three establishments have voluntarily embarked, and many of

* Since these letters were written, three instances of commanding officers of cavalry being attacked by their soldiers have lately occurred.

them lived on dried fruits, and parched grain, for whole weeks together, and on arriving at the point of attack, they have been prepared to land and take their place in line to oppose French troops in Egypt, Mauritius, and Java. Of their personal attachment to their European officers, their gratitude, and their high spirit, abundant proofs and numerous instances exist; two or three occur to me at present which will amuse as well as instruct you.

"A singular instance of self-devotion and chivalrous gallantry occurred during the siege of Bhurtpoor in 1805. The British army had been four times repulsed with heavy loss in attempting to storm. On the fifth and last attack, a native serjeant, attached as orderly to Lord Lake, perceiving him very thoughtful and anxious, asked his Excellency's permission to join his own (the grenadier) company, which was just about to quit the trenches to form part of the storming party. His request was not immediately attended to, till pressed through a staff-officer on the spot. Lord Lake recommended him to wait till it was his tour of duty, but after being much urged by his orderly, he allowed him to go—when putting his hand to his cap, he said, 'Do not despair General. The rascals! see how we will thrash them. Bhurtpoor, my Lord, shall fall this day, or you shall never see my face again.' The storming party went on, and the Sepoy grenadiers, headed by their gallant European officer, succeeded

in gaining a footing on the rampart, and even planted on it the British colours. A desperate effort was made to retain their position, but being unsupported, after sustaining a heavy loss, and seeing their European officer severely wounded, the Sepoys were compelled to fall back. All but Lord Lake's native orderly serjeant returned. In vain was every effort made to induce him to retreat; he had behaved nobly, but was still unhurt. Disdaining to quit the spot, he stood on the top of the breach, loading a firelock he had picked up from among the slain; and when called to by his wounded officer, for God's sake to retire, he turned round and said, 'Tell Lord Lake where you left me, Bhurtpoor has not fallen, and I cannot shew him my face.' He had scarcely uttered these words when he was seen to fall, and in an instant was hewn to pieces by the enemy.

"Among the instances of attachment and fidelity may be enumerated those of the Madras Sepoy prisoners, who were worked like felons both by Hyder and by the French on different occasions, to induce them to enter their armies, and oppose the English. Their spirit and attachment on both occasions stood the test, and they refused to change their condition as prisoners, at the risk of their honour. The Sepoys in Seringapatam even saved money out of the pittance allowed them as prisoners of war; and brought it to administer to the wants

of their officers. I recollect, on going into a general action which proved sanguinary, I was accosted by an old Sepoy, who had been drafted into another regiment, and whom I had not seen for many years—we instantly recognized each other, and I was asking him a few questions regarding some old comrades, when the enemy discharged his first gun. The old soldier, smiling, said, 'Observe Sir, they have begun already, but let us get at them, you shall then see the fun.' In a few minutes more we were engaged pell-mell, and after a hard day's work, the enemy was defeated. Next day I went to inquire for my old friend, but, alas! he was among the killed. About three weeks after this action, being in attendance on the commander-in-chief, I was much gratified by visiting the hospitals, containing from four to five hundred wounded men. The Sepoys, who had all received the utmost kindness from their European medical attendants, said to his Excellency—'General, our doctor (the surgeon in charge of the field hospital) has taken great care of us, you must now take care of him.' The appeal was not made in vain. The doctor was afterwards handsomely provided for, but did not long survive to enjoy the reward of his kindness.

"During the late Marratta war, the Peshwa, aware that many Sepoys of the Bombay army were recruited in his dominions, ordered the families of the troops to be seized, in order to induce the men

to desert, but without effect. One native officer was tampered with by his agents, but he instantly communicated to his officer the overtures which had been made. He was encouraged to dissemble with the enemy, and while he deceived him by promising to gain over the regiment to desert, he obtained important information which he regularly communicated. On the day of the battle of Kirky, the enemy supposing this regiment would join it, advanced without firing, and encouraged it to go over; nor were the enemy's troops undeceived till they met with a warm reception of musketry, and were put to route at the point of the bayonet.

"These are the soldiers you are to command, and who will I trust, one of these days, establish your military character. But I beg of you to observe, that the European officers alone are the hinge on which the machinery of our Indian army turns. There is not a day passes but some act or other of the European officer tends to loosen or to rivet the attachment of the Sepoys; and this being the case, how important is the duty which devolves on you. The native officers, though holding commissions, can never be expected to command more respect, if so much, as the serjeant of a European regiment. They are both taken from the lower orders of society, they are equally unlettered, and receive the same education in the barracks, in addition to which

the native officer may labour under some disadvantage as to caste. It is absurd to suppose that a bit of parchment, though bearing the seal of the state, and the names of the council, can alter the man; and you will soon find, if not before, at least the first time you are in action, the relative value and estimation of the European and native officer. These men, however, are usually fine old soldiers, and individually merit respect, attention, and kindness, and they must always be, in a great measure, the connecting link between the Sepoy and his officer.

"Yours, etc."

LETTER IX.

" Satâra.

" MY DEAR CHARLES,

" In my last letter I gave you a short description of the classes whence our Sepoys are enlisted; I shall now proceed to instruct you how they should be treated. An acquaintance with a people is to be obtained only by great observation, founded on constant and unreserved intercourse; but it is impossible to attain this object without a complete knowledge of the language of the country in which you reside. With an officer in the native army this is not a matter of choice, but one of imperious necessity. It is not sufficient to learn the mere words of command for a parade or drill, in order to make yourself understood in manœuvring and dressing your company, but you have other duties to fulfil. You have to pay your soldiers, to keep their accounts, to inspect and see that their arms, accoutrements, and clothing, are kept in order, to hear their little complaints, to attend to their wants, and to obtain redress for them. Moreover, until you know the name, character, and connexion of every Sepoy in your troop, you will not, in my opinion, be fit to command it. So re-

quisite is this deemed, that most reviewing generals make a point of ascertaining the merits of officers of troops, by putting such questions to them at the regimental inspection, as shew them to have acquired some knowledge beyond that of signing their abstract, and receiving their pay. The necessity, therefore, of your immediately studying the language being admitted, you must instantly procure a moonshy, or tutor, and apply studiously to the acquirement of the Hindoostany tongue. I do not promise you much amusement from the literature of this dialect, though some few beautiful poems do exist in it; but as it is most generally in use throughout India, it should be acquired as the channel of communicating your wants, and of obtaining information. A very short time, I have no doubt, will suffice to afford you sufficient acquaintance with the character and rudiments to enable you to write down words and sentences; and reading with the help of a dictionary, and unreserved intercourse with your moonshy, will give you confidence in speaking to other persons. Be very particular in your pronunciation, and in remarking idiomatical phrases, which are by far the most difficult parts of Eastern languages to Europeans. These tongues differ entirely from those of all the western nations, and in the pronunciation, you will find sounds so dissimilar from any you have ever heard, that it will be long, if ever, before you can articulate

them correctly; and in some words so trifling is the difference of sound, that many Europeans cannot distinguish them from others having totally different significations.

"Idiom is that peculiar construction which renders some languages so much more expressive than others, and there are none in the world so replete with figures of speech as those of the East. In Europe, the tone or manner of delivering a sentence frequently determines its meaning. The same prevails in all language; but in the East, the very same meaning is differently conveyed to the ear of the peasant and the prince, and the phrase is suited to the person addressed. This distinction prevails more in the Indian islands perhaps, than on the continent; the practice, however, is more or less universal. You will observe your moonshy, if a man of education, always address you in the third person, as in English we address noblemen, and men in office, 'your grace,' 'your lordship,' 'your excellency,' 'your honor,' and 'your worship.' But in India it is ill bred to address any but an inferior with you and thou. Men of superior rank, as in Europe, you would address by their title; equals are always addressed in the third person; and those of inferior rank, and in the middle station of life, it is courteous to address by name. There is no impropriety, if you do not know the name, in asking it in the first instance, and it gives you an op-

portunity of conciliating. The practice of giving persons titles in addressing them, to which they have not strictly a right, is more general in India than in England. Thus, for instance, to a labouring man you would say 'hoh patail,' to a soldier 'hoh jemadar,' or officer; just as we say 'farmer' and 'master' to a labourer, and 'captain' to all naval and military men. There is however another peculiarity which you must not forget, which is to make use of the plural number instead of the singular, in speaking to or of persons of respectability. It is by observing these little niceties in speech, that the man of education is distinguished from the clown in all western countries; but in the East, all men, however low their origin, are taught these distinctions at an early age, and politeness of speech becomes almost a part of their nature.

"The pure Hindoostany language is spoken only in Hindoostan Proper, the country bordering on the capital of the empire of Delhi. It is sometimes genteelly spoken, in some of the cities of the Deccan, by well bred Mahomedans, whose peculiar dialect it is. They brought it from the north when they invaded and settled in the south; and although their descendants now all speak the vernacular dialect of the Hindoo nations, among whom they are settled, still in their own families they preserve the Hindoostany so completely, that there is no Mahomedan, male or female, in In-

dia, who does not speak that tongue. This is a substantial reason for learning it in the first instance, but I strongly advise you to apply yourself, at some future period, to the acquirement of the provincial language of your regiment, to enable you to communicate freely, not only with the Hindoos in the corps, but with the common people of the country, who do not speak Hindoostany. In the Bombay army alone, of the three presidencies, a reward is held out to induce military men to acquire the Marratta and Guzeratty languages, by which means the European officers, speaking the dialect of all the men in the regiment, are better able to make impartial selections among the men for promotion. In the Madras army, though the recruits are drawn from the Teloogoo, Tamool, and Canarese districts, and vast numbers of the Sepoys cannot speak Hindoostany, yet no inducement being held out to the European officers to acquire these languages, no Hindoo, who does not understand the Mahomedan language, can ever hope for promotion. The consequence is, that although two thirds of the privates in the Madras infantry consist of Hindoos, yet among the native commissioned and non-commissioned officers, the ratio is inverse, and we find two thirds of them Mahomedans, and only one third Hindoos; a disproportion which is lamented by the government, and which for the last twenty years it has been an object of its desire to alter, without effect. Nor can

it be expected that so long as the European officers making the promotions speak the language of the Mahomedans alone, that the unlearned Hindoo can ever expect his fair share of promotion. This however is a measure for government to adopt or otherwise, as shall seem fit to it.

" At your age, when the mind is naturally prone to observation, it will be your own fault if you do not soon acquire, not only the language, but a knowledge of the manners and customs of the men and of the natives in general. Besides the daily intercourse with your moonshy, (the necessity of which I cannot too often repeat to you,) it will be flattering to the native officers of your company, when they come to you on duty, to be invited to sit down; when you might ask them as to their own services, in what regiments they have been, where they have been employed, and, above all, encourage them to describe the battles they have been engaged in. There is no way of winning the heart of an old soldier equal to that of encouraging him to talk of his services; and surely popularity among your troops is cheaply won indeed if gained by devoting occasionally an hour to hear the stories of the native officers of the regiment. Such courtesy is easily bestowed, and is highly esteemed when coming from superiors. Under any circumstances, I trust I shall never hear of your striking any native, and least of all a soldier. The instances of revenge pointed out in my last letter ought to deter you, if nothing else would; but I am

sure when you reflect how unmanly it is to beat a native, who is not calculated either from habit or personal strength to return a blow, I need not be apprehensive of your falling into so ungenteel a practice. You must also avoid making use of the gross and obscene terms of abuse so common among the lower classes, but which you will seldom find adopted by men of respectability or education. You should not only refrain from using these terms yourself, but you should not permit them to be used to others in your presence. Men of low origin are sometimes promoted to the rank of native officers for their good conduct in the field. In many instances, if not restrained, they tyrannize over the privates, and accustomed to hold coarse language from their childhood, they continue it after promotion towards men of caste. This conduct has, on many occasions, led to the desertion of some of the best men in regiments; and instances occur of their sacrificing a native officer to their vengeance previously to absconding.

"While on this subject, I may just mention an occurrence which took place within my knowledge, as elucidating the feelings of the natives with regard to the application of coarse terms to them. A general officer of distinction, who was much esteemed by the men, was one day in the act of leading his division to attack a battery. He was anxious to be in front, and was also desirous of carrying the

position at the point of the bayonet. Part of the division, while trotting on to the assault, commenced firing, and desirous of stopping it, the general in person gallopped up, and called out to the officers to do so, but impatient that the fire did not cease immediately, he vociferated loudly to the Sepoys, in the Hindoostany language, to desist, at the same time addressing them by a common, but coarse epithet. A native officer, who well knew the irritable feelings and the character of his countrymen, happened to be one of the general's aid-de-camps on that day. Without making an observation to any one, he silently pushed his horse alongside of the general's, and laying his hand on his arm, said in his quiet manner,—'Sir, Sir, recollect where we are—for God's sake be careful what you say at such a moment as this.' The gallant general acknowledged the justice of the reproof by one of his most benevolent smiles, and as promptly cheered the men by those endearing appellations, which no one knows so well where and when to use them. One cannot sufficiently admire the manly and honest, but delicate manner, in which the native aid-de-camp ventured to reprove his commander; whether we view it as applicable to their situation, advancing, as they were, up to the mouths of sixty pieces of cannon vomiting forth death and destruction, with the chance of being suddenly cut off with harsh words in his mouth; or whether it was merely intended to

convey an opinion, that that was not a time to reprove soldiers with bitterness, when they were bravely exposing themselves to add fame to his character. Nor is it less honourable to that gallant chief, who, at such a moment of anxious excitement, should have so calmly submitted to reproof from a subaltern officer, and he a native. But his penetrating mind perceived in an instant the truth and justice of the observation, and bowing to the hint afforded him, he availed himself of it to correct his error, and to turn the incident to account, by cheering the Sepoys by the most animating expressions, reminded them of former actions, and pointed out to them the glory that lay before them. Such trivial circumstances as these bind men's hearts to each other, or in an instant dissolve ties which have long existed, and might have continued through life. Few persons were less likely to have fallen into this casual mistake (but who might not at such a moment?) than the general officer alluded to; still no one could have improved the opportunity of amending it more graciously or more promptly.

"From what I have already said respecting castes, you will perceive the necessity of avoiding the little cooking circles of the Sepoys when in camp, and of not touching their persons or their culinary vessels on such occasions. It is as well, however, you should know exactly what articles they deem pollutable, and what may be touched without be-

coming impure. Of the former description are carthen vessels of all sorts, water in pots, and prepared food. The cooking circle, if trodden on by the foot of a stranger, is not only polluted, but every thing within the consecrated ring becomes impure. Of those articles not liable to pollution we may reckon, fruits dried or ripe, grain of all kinds, and vegetables which have not undergone a culinary process. This rule obtains generally but in the instances of sugar and salt, which, although previously manufactured by boiling, are still not liable to contamination.

" Hindoos of no class whatsoever can partake of food dressed by a Mahomedan, although the latter will eat that cooked by a Hindoo; but these people have so far adopted the prejudices of caste, that they refuse to allow outcasts to touch their vessels or to bring them water. Europeans very naturally disregard this circumstance, and have become identified, in the eyes of Hindoo and Mussulman, with the wretched and debased outcast, and in spite of their rank and power are looked on as unclean and as impure as those debased wretches. There are instances, however, of well-informed Mahomedans who are above these prejudices, and who have no objection to sit down with us, where they are satisfied that neither the cooks, nor the attendants in waiting, are outcasts.

" In passing the houses of natives, particularly

your own Sepoys, do not stare into them, nor make any remarks on the females of their families, nor attempt to enter their huts or hovels. They are prone to jealousy, and in particular the Mahomedans, so much so that you cannot with propriety ask after the health of a man's wife, though you know she be dying, unless you say 'How are they in your house?' and they even dislike your noticing their children, especially girls of more than three or four years of age. While they dislike your entering into their private family circles, the Sepoys feel much flattered by the attendance of their officers at their pageants held during their holidays and festivals. On these occasions they usually invite their European officers to come and see them, and motives of attention and courtesy, if not of curiosity, should prompt you to attend them. There (such is the influence of family and caste) you will not unfrequently see a private superintending as master of the revels and of the feast, where, perhaps, the native officer of his own company could not be admitted. These instances occur now more rarely, since greater attention has been paid to the distinction of caste by us, than when we were less acquainted with their peculiarities.

"As an officer in the army, you are always entitled to be saluted by your men, and I trust inclination will always prompt you to return it; but it is necessary to put you on your guard on this point,

as the neglect of a salute from any native is considered the most pointed insult you can offer him. Neither your pursuits nor amusements will lead you often among natives of the upper ranks. Their manners and habits are so much at variance with our own, that, excepting in business, we can have little intercourse with them, though you may sometimes find young men of independent property who will join in your sports in the field. It will, however, frequently happen that you may require the services of the middling classes, such as farmers and labourers, to assist in finding your game. On these occasions, conciliatory language, kind manner, and small presents of money, if at the same time you exercise forbearance towards them in cases of ignorance, will always enable you to obtain every aid and attention; whereas an opposite line of conduct may bring on disputes and affrays, which sometimes lead to bloodshed. Of this I recollect the following instance. An officer who did not understand the languages was travelling with a small Sepoy guard through the Nizam's territory, some years since, and he wanted a guide to shew the road. The inhabitants, who had been accustomed to be pressed to carry loads by European officers and others travelling by that route, perceiving the guard to be small, shut their gates and prepared for resistance. No entreaties or threats on the part of the Sepoys could induce any of the

villagers to come out, till at length some of the former got over a low part of the wall and entered the place. Finding but few men and many women, they seized an elderly man, and dragged him away to shew the road. This person happened to be the head man of the village. The women flew into the fields and communicated what had happened to the men, who ran tumultuously to rescue their chief, mostly armed with sticks, or ox goads, with which they had been driving their ploughs. The European officer, unable to address them or to understand even the cause of their fury, desired his Sepoys to load and to stand on the defensive; while he, taking the most prominent position, warned the villagers by signs not to approach. They were loud in their vociferations to demand the release of their head man, and one young man, more forward than the rest, rushed forward, and seizing him by the hand, attempted a forcible rescue. At the same time some stones were thrown at the party, and the officer, now deeming himself justified in self-defence, fired, and shot the young village leader to the heart. It was the head man's eldest son, who fell dead at his father's feet. Blows and shots were now exchanged, and more blood spilt on both sides. On learning the truth of the case, the poor young European officer was so much affected that he lost his spirits, and never held up his head again. He

died not long after. This melancholy catastrophe would not have occurred if the officer had spoken the language, and conducted himself from the first with common prudence and moderation. A little conciliation on his part, and the offer of a very trifling recompense, would probably have secured him a guide from one of that class which resides near every village, and whose express duty it is to escort travellers.

" We must not be astonished at our countrymen in India becoming sometimes involved in dilemmas of this nature, when we find them after many years' absence almost as ignorant of the customs of their native land on their return to it. I recollect hearing of a general officer who had been long accustomed to military command in the East, meeting with a very awkward repulse on his first arrival at Weymouth, after being away from England more than thirty years. It was a fine summer's evening, in the month of June, when he came ashore, and having landed with only one trunk, and without a servant, he hardly knew how to act when on terrâ firmâ. The boatmen were engaged with some ladies who were of the party, and my friend, the general, being accustomed to much attendance, and impatient of delay, was anxious to proceed to the inn. But how to convey his trunk was the difficulty. Several idle persons were look-

ing on at the strangers, and my friend's portly and consequential military swagger, and an imperious manner, attracted general attention. At length, turning to one of the crowd he said—'I say, my man, I wish you would assist in bringing my trunk to the nearest inn.' The man, not being a porter, was rather surprised at being so accosted, and asked if it were very heavy. 'Oh no,' said the General, 'it is very light, one man will very easily take it.' 'Why then d—n your eyes,' said the surly Englishman, 'you may carry it yourself. Do you understand that?' and turning on his heel walked off, muttering sundry oaths about outlandish nabobs.

"But to return to India. The character of the community is remarkable for its sobriety. It is among persons of the lowest order alone we find the habit of drinking prevail, and all natives consider inebriety only exists in low company. It is by no means necessary we should relinquish our habits to adopt theirs; but we shall best preserve the respect of the people by not exposing ourselves to their derision. I would neither invite a Bramin into my room when the table was covered with joints of beef, nor a Mahomedan when a sucking pig was on the board; but least of all would I expose myself after having drunk freely. It is not easy for us to fancy the disgust excited among the natives when they see Europeans, as is sometimes the case, in a state of

riotous intoxication. Where our habits are familiar, the people make great allowances; but where we are little known, it is impossible we can study the prejudices of the natives too much, or be too circumspect in our own persons, if it be our object to maintain respect.

"Yours, etc."

LETTER X.

Satâra.

MY DEAR GEORGE,

I AM glad to hear you are about to quit the Presidency. The dissipation and idleness attendant on the society of an Indian capital, where young men and young women are brought together, are ill calculated for the prosecution of those studies to which you must now devote yourself. Your determination to quit the scene of fascination wherein you have been lately moving, does credit to your head, though perhaps at variance with the feelings of the heart. I have heard much of your friend Miss W. I am by no means surprised to hear she occupies more of your thoughts and of your time than your moonshy; and I am quite sure it is time you should quit the gay sphere in which you are moving at present, and evade the winning smiles and dulcet songs of such sirens. It is much, very much too early for you to think of marrying, and I am confident neither balls nor horse-races will increase your inclination for study, to which every motive should now impel you.

You have entered a profession in which application alone can ensure you distinction, and you have

the choice on the one hand of pleasures which must lead to pecuniary embarrassments, and on the other hand business which will as certainly lead you to eminence and to pecuniary independence. In the letters to Charles, which I lately sent you, you will observe how ill he managed with regard to his servants at first, and what inconvenience he experienced in consequence; so that I need hardly dwell more on this point. You and your young friend, however, are strangers to the manners of the people, and I regret you have no one of experience to accompany you. It is precisely under such circumstances that young men involve themselves in scrapes, which it is sometimes difficult for them to avoid. I recollect a melancholy instance of this nature occurring in the person of a youth travelling alone to join his regiment. He had purchased a gun before he left the coast, perhaps the first he ever had in his life, and being determined to exercise his skill, he made war on every thing he saw. On the occasion to which I am now going to allude, he took up his quarters, after the journey of the morning, within the precincts of a Hindoo temple, in one of the outer range of buildings usually appropriated for the lodging of Hindoo travellers. During the day he saw several monkeys, animals held in great veneration in India. These long continued to afford him amusement by their gambols, and especially those which had young. It

was entertaining to see a mother combing with her nails the hair of one imp seated between her knees, while she sat on the tails of two others, who could only range backwards and forwards and over her to the extent of them. At another time a large female monkey might be seen running rapidly along the wall of the temple on all fours, with two or three young ones clinging under her, while every now and then these active mothers with desperate leap would spring from the wall to the branches of a neighbouring banyan-tree which spread its gigantic arms over the whole area on one side of the temple. Fortunate had it been for the young man had he confined his amusement to the mere observation of these interesting but mischievous animals. The sacred monkeys had been accustomed to be fed by the priests, and no Hindoo traveller considered his offering to the temple complete till a portion of his food had been given to the dumb guardians of the holy shrine. The officer, however, not aware of these circumstances, was suddenly roused by a servant calling out that a monkey had carried off the bread, and being determined to be revenged on the thief, he very naturally, though not humanely, had recourse to his gun, and in an instant the sacred animal lay dead at his feet. A shriek from some Bramin women who were just entering the temple in procession with offerings of oil and flowers, indicated their horror; they ran

home and told the story. Not long after, the priests of the temple accompanied by many of the town's-people soon expelled the obnoxious intruder out of their sanctuary, upbraiding him with loud execrations, which fortunately perhaps the young man did not understand, and he was compelled to spend the remainder of a hot day under a tree in an adjacent field at some distance. Nor was this all. A sacred guardian of the temple had been slain by the hands of an outcast; blood had been shed on the pavement of the temple, and that, the blood of a divinity. Numerous were the ceremonies performed during the day to appease the wrath of the idol of the temple. Prayers were chanted, incense burned, the numbers of lamps were increased by the voluntary contributions of the inhabitants, and nine times nine times was the sanctum circumambulated by a band of priests following the female minstrels, who chanted hymns to appease the deity for the enormity that had been committed.

Fortunate had it been for all parties if the tragedy had ended with this pageant; but strange to relate, the European officer was seized shortly after his supper with severe pains in the bowels, and died during the night. The inhabitants fully believe to this day he fell a victim to the vengeance of the idols. No Englishman was nearer than a hundred miles; the body could undergo no impartial examination to ascertain the cause of his sudden death,

as it was necessary, from the heat of the climate, to bury him immediately; but from the examination of his servants and inquiries made at the village, there is too much reason to fear he was poisoned, and not improbably by means of his own domestics. These might, without knowing it, easily have put arsenic into his food, which might have been mixed with the salt used for seasoning his meat; a conclusion the more probable, as the ingredients for the dinner were ascertained to have been purchased subsequently to the death of the monkey. I am quite sure you will feel commiseration for the unhappy victim, and I can readily believe with what indignation and horror you will contemplate the conduct of the natives on this occasion. All this is quite natural; but I hope to be able to convince you that their conduct was by no means extraordinary for a people so imbued with religious prejudices, and so devoted to their temples and priests. Though it be true that among the well-informed classes of all nations, superstition is for the most part derided or despised, yet we have had some great men (even in our times) who have not been free from it. The superstition of the Indians, after all, is not perhaps worse than that of the ancient Pagans of the West. Their mythologies, at all events, resemble each other so closely, that it is difficult to suppose the coincidence accidental, and as it seems certain the Romans and Greeks got

their religion from the East, it is by no means impossible that in Hindoostan, at this day, we witness the ceremonies which gave rise to the Paganism of Europe. But we do not suppose that Socrates, Plato, or Demosthenes, in Greece, or that Cicero or Seneca in Rome, believed in those tales which were so current and found almost universal credence among the mass of the people. I have little doubt that there was a period when India possessed many eminent scholars who discredited the romantic tales of their heroic poems, and that when literature and science shone in full lustre, the gross superstition of the present day then prevailed only among the lower orders.

The subjection of India to the Mahomedan yoke during the last eight centuries, at once subverted the government and the learning of the Hindoos, so that we find now very few well educated men amongst them, and none altogether free from superstition. In proportion as they are well informed, however, we meet with those who are in the greatest degree free from prejudice. But is superstition confined to India alone? Does she not stalk abroad all over the universe in the exact ratio in which ignorance prevails? Who then shall upbraid the Hindoo for his ignorance, when all motive for improvement is denied him? Though the Pagan superstition has ceased in Greece and Rome, yet almost all orders of those venerable nations at the

present day are fully as superstitious as their ancestors. Nor perhaps are many individuals of the upper classes of those people much more free from fanaticism than the most bigoted of the Hindoos. Among the latter people, at any rate, we meet with the virtue of universal toleration, and though they refuse to identify themselves with strangers to their caste, or to associate with them, they are always ready to acknowledge that there are many roads to heaven, and that no man should be upbraided for the path he follows, unless it encroaches on the rights and privileges of the rest of mankind. No nations are altogether free from superstition. Even among ourselves, who hold other people in such contempt, have we no such weakness? The landsman cannot enter into the seaman's feelings, who would not willingly sail on a Friday, and who prefers a Sunday to commence his voyage; nor can he comprehend the feverish sensation of a sailor who hears any one whistling during the approach of a gale. The apprehension of ghosts which prevailed among the soldiers of the British army during the late war, was productive of very serious evil and inconvenience; but how was it to be remedied? You will hardly persuade either a Scotchman or an Indian to prosecute a journey if a hare cross the road, and the ancients scarcely ever undertook an enterprise without consulting the flights of birds, the di-

rection of smoke, and the mode of burning of sacrifices.

The Hindoo Pantheon, as extravagant as that of the Greeks, is devoid of all that beautiful imagery in which the poets of the latter have clothed it, but it is not more preposterous. I do not intend to enter much into detail on the subject, but it is proper you should know what animals are held sacred, in order to prevent your falling into a similar situation with the poor young officer who killed the monkey. Without going very deeply into Hindoo mythology, you will find abundant information on this subject in Moore's Pantheon, which will, at all events, render you familiar with the names and peculiar attributes of their divinities.

Of the animal creation, none appears to be held in such estimation as the cow, though it is a mistake to believe worship is offered to it. But while it is true no sacrifices or offerings are made to this useful and domesticated brute, it is frequently made the object of confirming the most solemn oaths. I have seen it brought into an Indian court of justice and Bramins sworn by placing their hands on the animal, and calling it to bear witness of their veracity. The pious Hindoo has a sort of filial attachment to the creature that affords him his daily food. From the kind manner in which they are treated by all classes, the cows become extremely gentle,

so much so, that their docility has grown into a proverb; when speaking of a good man of mild manners, it is usual to say "he has the meek disposition and temper of a cow." When a cow becomes aged, she is a pensioner in the family in which she has been brought up, for a Hindoo would certainly as soon think of selling a cow to a butcher for slaughter, as he would of sacrificing his own child; and the horror they have of the practice of slaying kine may well be conceived, when it is known to form a condition whenever Hindoo princes form treaties with European or Mahomedan states, that the troops of the latter shall not slaughter cattle within the dominions of the former. Cow slaughter was strictly punished under the Peshwa's government, and I know an instance of a man who is still to be seen walking about occasionally in this vicinity, who suffered severely for having killed a cow. The story as he tells it, and which is confirmed by persons who were present at the trial, is simply this:—The poor man, who was then a small farmer, hearing a noise in one of his outhouses, and having been robbed a few nights before of some sheaves of wheat, now resolved to seize or punish the thief, who on this occasion proved to be nothing more or less than a cow, and as she attempted to rush by him in the dark, he made a blow at her with a sword he had in his hand, which falling on her loins maimed her so that she died. The person

who had suffered the loss of the cow was a holy Bramin, who brought the matter forward before the magistrates, and the farmer was sentenced to lose his left hand. In this mutilated state he now survives to tell the story, and strange to say, although he conceives the punishment might have been commuted for a heavy fine, he does not on the whole consider the sentence unjust, though perhaps rather severe.

The bull however is an object of worship, and in most Hindoo towns of eminence you will meet with tame bulls overburthened with fat, lolling their length in the streets and highways, obstructing passengers and carriages. They are fed by the people, or rather they feed themselves, for they make no scruple of shoving their heads into whole baskets full of grain or vegetables, exposed for sale in the shop-windows or in open stalls; and although driven away by the waving of handkerchiefs in their faces, or by other gentle methods, yet no Hindoo of any character would think of striking one of these animals with such severity as to endanger its life, or would run the risk of maiming the sacred brute. And ridiculous as it may sound, you may often see a Hindoo driving away one of these animals from his grain basket by hearty slaps on the face, and on the back, addressing him at the same time by the respectful title of "mahraj! mahraj!" meaning "your holiness", or "your worship."

Some learned antiquarians with much ingenuity, and with very specious arguments, have deduced the tauric worship of the East and West, in former times, from the constellation bearing that name, but I dare say you have little inclination to enter into the disquisition, and are satisfied with knowing the fact that the bull is an object of Hindoo veneration, without inquiring how or when it became so.

The monkey, the personification of the heroic Hunooman, who led the army of Ram against the giant Rawun, is also worshipped. The peacock, the bird which conveys Sherusputty, the daughter of Bramha, through the air, has also divine honours paid to it. So, in like manner, has the brown eagle or kite, the bird on which Sheva soars through the heavens. Among reptiles, is the venomous nâg, the cobra-da-capello of European zoology. This active, and deadly serpent, is sometimes worshipped in temples, where it is pampered with milk and sugar by the priests; and a surprising instance of the effect of kind treatment, in subduing the most irritable spirits, is exemplified in these creatures. The Hindoos have a notion that the sagacity and the long cherished malice of this worm are equal to that of man. I have seen them come out from their holes in the temples, when a pipe has been played to them, and feed out of the hand, as tamely as any domestic animal; and it is when in this state of docility, so opposite to their shy but impetuous na-

ture, the common people believe that the deity has condescended to adopt that form. It seems probable that this hooded snake was the dragon of the heathen worship, and the shape of its head, and its activity when in a state of excitement probably gave rise to the fable of its being winged.

Offerings of flowers, oil, or clarified butter, rice tinged with a reddish-yellow powder, and dried nuts preserved with salt, are made to the Hindoo idols, which are frequently anointed, and sometimes even painted. I need hardly say how offensive it is to approach these images, by entering the sanctum, much less to touch them. It is proper to mention in this place the extreme disgust the Hindoos have to the habit of spitting, and nothing is so offensive as to touch any thing with the tongue before it is given to them. You would hardly suppose that they have a particular objection to receiving charge of a letter after seeing you wet the wafer in your mouth. Thence the general practice of having a small cup of water standing on office desks to prevent this necessity. With Mahomedans, to spit on the floor is a mark of intentional insult and contempt, and among themselves is usually resented on the spot. With this knowledge, therefore, how careful should we be not to spit about rooms in which the natives sit, and more especially in temples or mosques, where our inclination so frequently leads us, as well as into the magnificent mausolea

of the Mahomedan kings and princes. On all these occasions I am always in the habit of taking off my shoes, as a mark of respect, and in consequence I never meet with interruption in gratifying my curiosity. On the other hand, I have met with some of my countrymen who fancied it degrading, and rather than provoke insult by forcing themselves into such places, have remained outside, wrapt up in their own consequence, but compelled to submit to the mortification of not seeing perhaps some extremely interesting and beautiful object. I could not help remarking, however, the contrast of the conduct of a Hindoo Raja on one occasion, to that of Europeans in general. He had come from his capital to pay a visit to the governor of one of the presidencies, and went to see a number of public buildings, such as arsenals and manufactories, none of which being carpeted, he entered all unceremoniously, without taking off his shoes. On coming to the church door, however, and perceiving every body take off their hats, he turned round to a gentleman in attendance, and said, "I ought to take off my shoes, perhaps?" The reply was, "we uncover our heads out of reverence to the place." He observed, "very right,—it is the house of God," and instantly stepping out of his shoes, he and all his suite entered barefooted, and after examining the building went out highly gratified. I could

not help blushing for many of those Europeans who were of the party. The Raja shewed himself both a man of sense and a man of the world, and in my opinion infinitely their superior in both respects.

Yours, etc.

LETTER XI.

Satâra.

MY DEAR GEORGE,

I AM so much vexed at the receipt of your letter, describing the unfortunate circumstance that has occurred to your young friend from striking his servant, that I am little disposed to write a very long letter. How unlucky that the letters to Charles missed you on the road. I almost flatter myself that had you and your friend perused them before, this accident would not have happened. Fatal consequences have often arisen from Europeans using their fists to strike the natives. I recollect one in which death ensued; but I hope and trust, that in the present instance the poor man will soon get well, although the symptom you mention, of spitting blood, is certainly alarming. It is very cruel and unmanly to strike these people, and you will have already seen my opinion on this subject, since you have got my letters to Charles. But it is difficult to foresee always what may be the result of this practice. I was heartily amused once by hearing of a gentleman who had locked himself up with his man-cook to prevent interference, with a determination of chastising him with a horsewhip. Hav-

ing indulged his humour some time, and much longer than the cook approved, the latter bellowed out loudly, and begged for mercy. "You may call, you rascal," answered his master, "but I have taken care nobody shall come near us, by locking the doors of the house." The cook, unable to bear the punishment, and aware that no one could come to his master's assistance, made a desperate effort to possess himself of the horsewhip, and having done so, he repaid his master in the same coin, who was so ashamed of the circumstance that he took care to take no other notice of it at the time than to turn off the cook. Another similar imprudence ended more tragically. An European gentleman, well skilled in the pugilistic art, was in the habit of striking his menials, and all, at one time or other, had felt the effects of his modern education, with the exception alone of his steward or butler, a Mahomedan, who prided himself on being a syud, and descended from the prophet. One day, while the master was preparing for a hunting excursion, and his loaded pistols lay on the table, he had occasion to send for this steward, and finding fault with him, made use of some very coarse and abusive language. The man's face indicated the feelings with which he received it, and he defended his conduct from the imputation of dishonesty, of which he was accused, with much warmth and indignation. Incensed at this behaviour, though in fact resulting

from the integrity of the servant, the master struck him one or two blows. The man, recovering himself, rushed to the table and seized a loaded pistol, and having cocked it, thus addressed his master:—"Misfortune, Sir, has driven me, though a man of family, to earn my bread in your service. I have lived with many masters, but have neither been accused of dishonesty, nor suffered abuse. This day I have not only been degraded by both, but have received a blow. My honour forbids me to survive it unrevenged, and my sense of gratitude to a master who has fed me, has saved you from the consequences." The master instantly sprang forward as the man raised the pistol to his head; but it was too late, he was only in time to catch the dying man in his arms. Fortunately for this gentleman, there were other persons who witnessed the catastrophe, or, with the notorious character he had for losing his temper with his servants, strong suspicions would naturally have fixed on him. It is hardly necessary to say, he never struck another native.

There are some masters of so notorious ill fame in this respect that they can get no servants to live with them at all, or even to engage in their service. The importance I attach to servants is not merely confined to our own comforts, but it extends to the effect which bad servants have on the temper of masters, and also to the opinion those masters form of all the natives, from the specimens

they have of the domestics of their own family. Persons who pay their servants liberally and treat them kindly, expect good domestics, and will obtain them in all parts of the world; whereas, where the wages are insufficient and servants are ill treated, no respectable men will remain; but if they do, you may rely on it they are able to reconcile themselves to their situation by peculations and other sinister advantages. How often have I seen masters fly into violent passions with their servants for no other reason than that they could not make themselves understood, venting on them the vexation which arose solely out of their own ignorance. Not unfrequently, also, it happens that servants are employed to do things of which they have no previous knowledge. An officer is in a great hurry to go out shooting, and while he is making preparations for the party, hands over his double-barrelled gun, perhaps with a percussion lock or some other new invention, to his man to clean. The unhappy domestic, who has never seen any other firelock but a musket undergo this ceremony, with the zeal of a dutiful servant applies powdered china and oil to the stained barrel of the fowling-piece, and succeeds, after much pains, in bringing it to some reasonable degree of brilliancy; and when the implement is called for by the master, assures him that in a few more attempts the barrel will not be less highly polished than that of any musket in the company.

I can fancy your laughing heartily at this description, but I really once witnessed such a scene. The master had no right to be angry; the poor man knew nothing of our English manufactures, and it was quite natural for one who had never seen any thing but a bright barrel to suppose, when he was told to *clean* the fowling-piece, that he wished to make it rival in brightness the soldier's firelock, which undergoes constant rubbing to attain its high state of polish. The numerous instances of mistakes and of accidents which occur owing to the ignorance of servants, are no doubt very provoking, and usually arise from our want of discretion in employing persons to perform duties they do not thoroughly comprehend. The fatal result of ill treatment to servants, however, in the end always falls on the master. It is sometimes lamentable to see the distress of military officers in the field, deprived as they frequently are of all aid, at a time when they most require it. In these situations the value of good servants and the misery of bad ones are truly appreciated. In some instances I have seen them carrying loads on their backs during a march (when the cattle have failed) to save their master's property, and preserve his little stock of comforts; while in other cases, at a period when wounds or sickness not only render attendance doubly necessary, but make the master more irritable than ever, how often do servants, unable to bear with their peevishness, and actuated

by no feelings of attachment from long-remembered kindnesses, desert. Sometimes they even rob their masters, who, abandoned by all around them, sink into the grave, the victims of their own misconduct. That such never will be your lot I trust, and that it never may be is the fervent wish of

Yours, etc.

LETTER XII.

Satâra.

MY DEAR GEORGE,

YOUR description of the cause of the unfortunate accident that has befallen your young friend, renders the case worse and worse. You observe when his master addressed him (in English of course, and which the servant did not understand), asking him why he stood with his arms folded across his body in so insolent a posture, the man persisted in doing so, which seems to have been the original cause of provocation. You go on to say, that it is a habit which both your servants have acquired since you left the Presidency. The simple truth is, that while so pleasantly engaged in European society, you had little time or inclination to observe the habits of your servants; but it so happens that the posture of which you complain is the most respectful a native domestic can assume while standing in his master's presence. So that your friend's servant, who is in danger of his life through the pettish anger of a boy, is actually suffering for being too anxious to please him and be respectful. You must pardon my warmth, but I lose all patience

when I think to what the natives of this country are sometimes subjected by our ignorance and irritability. By your own account the man is scarcely out of danger, and what will be your feelings and those of your friend if he should die, and the young man is tried for his life. It is really shocking to reflect on the consequence. The sooner you become acquainted with the several peculiarities of this people the better, and I shall not consider the time mis-spent in addressing to you a few more letters of advice on the subject. I ought not however to be much surprised at your ignorance, when I witnessed an officer of the army, who had been ten years in the service, box his servant's ears for the very same thing which seems to have given your friend and yourself such offence, and this happened not more than a month ago in my presence.

We are in reality grossly ignorant of the most common Indian habits, and not a day passes in which we are not unnecessarily offended at what we observe in them, without considering that scarcely an act of our own lives does not in some way or other wound their prejudices. I have already mentioned many instances in which our manners differ, and I shall endeavour to think of more. The bow, which we look upon as courteous, is described by a learned Mahomedan historian, speaking of the Portuguese mode of address, "as a monkey-like or apish salu-

tation"; and yet, what should we think of the Javanese peasantry, who sit down as a mark of respect while a superior passes by?

Some gentlemen are so unreasonable as to expect all the natives they meet to salute them, more especially, if they enter a room in which a native of respectability is sitting, when they require that he should rise and pay them that compliment. The practice in this respect varies in different parts of India, and no general rule can be given. In most instances a well-bred Mahomedan would offer you his chair, and refuse to sit, although you were a stranger, before you were yourself seated. The Hindoos, however, are by no means so polished as the Mahomedans, either in their manners or their language; but the honest bluntness of the middling classes puts an Englishman so much in mind of those of his own country, that he is disposed to forgive a want of courtesy after he has lived some time amongst them. Both Hindoos and Mahomedans, in the upper classes of society, have their rules of propriety as well established as among ourselves. No man of respectability thinks it proper to notice a stranger he may casually meet in another's house, until he has been introduced, after which all formality ceases.

The propensity to take offence, however, pervades both military men and civilians among ourselves, though the former seem more litigious than the latter, for two reasons, first, because they are more ig-

norant of the native customs, and secondly, because they are in the habit of exacting deference and respect from their soldiers, the only natives with whom they have much intercourse, and from whom they imbibe very strong, but unjust prejudices against every other class. I once saw a remarkable instance of this exemplified in an officer who was living with me. We were walking together, and had occasion to cross a stream of water by a narrow plank bridge, near which were sitting several Bramins of respectability, performing their morning 'ablutions and devotions. One of them, who had occupied the path near the bridge, rose to let us pass, while another who was next him merely shuffled aside, and made room without rising. I passed on without observation, but my friend, irritated that he did not get up and salute him, kicked him into the stream, and called him in his own language an unmannerly brute. It proved to be the Hindoo judge of the court. In vain did I represent to my guest how ill he had behaved, and urge him to offer an apology, and I had much difficulty in preventing the Bramin from lodging a public complaint in the court against him. Now this officer had been ten years in the army in India, and had never been one day absent from his regimental duty. He was a good soldier, and much beloved by his Sepoys, to whom he was greatly attached; but he had a vulgar and ignorant aversion to Bramins in general, and he never used any

other epithet towards them than that of "rascals": though when asked to explain in what respect he had found them so, he always evaded the question by general assertions, that they imposed on the rest of the people; in other words, that being the priests, and the only men of education in the country, they availed themselves of these circumstances to exact deference and respect from the lower classes.

While on the subject of salutations, I wish to impress on your mind the vast importance the natives attach to this ceremony, and to its being returned. Crowned heads alone assume to themselves the privilege of merely acknowledging salutes by a slight inclination of the head. So particular are all classes on this subject, that men of official rank, rather than incur the risk of giving offence, have men with gold or silver sticks preceding them, whose duty it is to call their attention to persons saluting them on the road as they pass, crying out with a loud voice, "be pleased to look to the right, (or left, as it may be) at such a one (mentioning the name or vocation of the person), who pays his respects," when the nobleman or grandee instantly returns it. Such is their sense of insult, if it be not properly acknowledged, that in many Mahomedan towns in the present day, young men of family go about armed, and sometimes attended by armed domestics, prepared to resent an indignity of this nature, if offered to them by persons of rank. A

remarkable instance of punctilio on the subject of court ceremony occurred many years ago, which is quite familiar to every Mahomedan in the Deccan, and which led to fatal consequences. The late Nizam Ally Khan, making a tour through his dominions, went into the province of Berar, then in charge of the Nawâb (or nabob) Ismael Khan, the father of Sulabut Khan, a well known chief in our own times. It had been the practice of this nobleman to pay his first visit to the Nizam, and then to receive the visit of his minister; but on the present occasion, the Nizam required him to visit the minister, and then to proceed, attended by the minister, to wait on the Nizam. The nabob of Berar resisted this new mode of introduction so strenuously that the Nizam, by virtue of his supremacy, ordered him to adopt the plan he had formed, or submit to the alternative of being attacked. Ismael Khan consulted his family and retainers, and they unanimously agreed it were better to die, than that he should lose his honour. The consequence was, that the Nizam ordered out his troops to the number of ten thousand men, and proceeded to reduce the refractory chief. Ismael Khan, finding to what extremities matters were now brought, resolved, rather than submit, to perish. He boldly put himself at the head of five hundred faithful followers, and charging the Nizam's army, lost his own life at the foot of Nizam Ally Khan's elephant. Of his faith-

ful and high-spirited relatives and countrymen few survived to tell the tale. This carelessness of life when their feelings are excited, appears to be a remarkable feature of the oriental character. They possess very little of what we call patriotism, and seldom feel injuries that affect them remotely as a body so much as those which come home to them individually; but when personally concerned, they have that high sense of honour which disdains to survive disgrace.

It seems proper you should be acquainted with some of the most common modes of salutation, as they differ according to the person saluting or being saluted. The compliment paid to equals is by standing erect, and merely bringing the hand gracefully forward, and then touching the forehead. This is the simple "salam." When the body is bent, and the hand is brought up from near the ground, the compliment is termed "tusleem"; and this form is observed by acknowledged inferiors, and is returned by the "salam." The "koornish" is another mode of salute practised by menials, and even by servants of whatever rank, towards masters only. Feudatory chiefs, though nearly independent on their own estates, perform the "koornish" to their liege lords. The act of acknowledging salutations generally is termed "tazeem", literally "doing honour." When a person, entitled to sit, enters a room, and salutes the company, they all rise, and after re-

turning the compliment, do not sit again till the guest has found a seat. Any neglect of this ceremony would, among Mahomedans in particular, produce a quarrel. The seat of honour is at the upper end of the room, and the gradation of rank is observed to descend successively as that situation approaches towards the door, regarding which positions people are extremely tenacious. In some families formality is carried to such length, that I have seen the sons standing till their father desired them to be seated. Children, and domestics (long in the family), instead of saluting their parents or masters, walk up to them, and put both hands on their feet, a ceremony always observed by all other Hindoos towards Bramins. On these occasions the person whose feet are thus touched puts his hands on the head of the one who is bending down, and blesses him.

Although the natives cannot eat with us, this does not prevent their inviting us sometimes to dine at their houses, when it is ludicrous to observe the mistakes to which we are liable. But on these occasions I have never seen an instance of offence being taken by the natives, when not intended by the European; while on the other hand I have too frequently witnessed resentment and rudeness evinced by Europeans towards the people of the house, when nothing but politeness was intended by them. There is a peculiarity in their mode of eat-

ing, which is very striking to us. In the first place, they all sit on the carpet, and have a white cloth spread before the guests. The Mahomedans, who eat meats of all sorts, excepting (of course) pork, have a tray placed before each guest containing metal plates or china bowls, and vessels filled with various articles of food. Previously to eating, a servant brings round a basin and ewer to wash the hands of each guest, and the master of the house says a short grace. During the meal some of the dishes are removed and others supplied, while cool sherbets form the substitute for fermented liquors. Among the middling and lower classes of the Mahomedans, several sit down round one large dish and eat together. Among the Hindoos, on the other hand, the dinner is laid out on flat plates formed of fresh leaves either of the banyan or plaintain tree neatly sewed together. The Hindoos also differ from the Mahomedans in this respect, that they never eat together off the same dish or plate. Each person has his separate plate like ourselves, and when he has done with it throws it away. The Hindoos also put off their shoes when eating, and usually wash their feet, as well as their hands, both before and after meals. Like the Mahomedans, they abstain from fermented liquors, but drink little else than water, or perhaps milk, if in the evening; spices are then introduced, wrapt up usually in the common aromatic leaf we call betel,

and this is invariably eaten by all persons who can afford it throughout India, with the exception of children before they are admitted to mix in society. This privilege they usually attain when between twelve and thirteen years of age, and they conduct themselves with a degree of propriety quite surprising.

As every native is married, and considers it almost disreputable to be single, he is surprised that Europeans, who it is supposed can afford the expense, should remain, as is frequently the case, in a single state for so many years. With them, all who can afford it enter this state; and a man considers it a disgrace to have a son or daughter above nine years of age, who is not already married, or at all events betrothed. In these marriages of course the children themselves have no voice, nor are they so much as consulted. The ceremony, however, indicates that it was established at a period when the parties used to be full grown; an æra which has long since passed away. These observations are confined principally to the practice of the Hindoos, for among the Mahomedans both sexes are restrained from marriage till they have attained the age of maturity, though in some instances early betrothals take place. In these connexions, both Hindoos and Mahomedans are extremely particular as to the parentage of the contracting parties. No man of family, however poor, will give

his daughter to any person of base origin; and illegitimate children among the Hindoos can only marry with others born under similar circumstances. In some castes, such is the pride of family, that rather than run the risk of the daughters remaining unmarried, the parents put them to death as soon as they are born. This abominable custom was in some manner checked by the persuasions of some of our countrymen, but the practice is, I hear, now as prevalent as ever.

Yours, etc.

LETTER XIII.

Satâra.

MY DEAR GEORGE,

I QUITE agree in the justice of many of the observations contained in your letter. I am prepared to admit that many of the Indian habits are very revolting to us, and among others that of conveying the food to the mouth with their fingers. But you ought to have some consideration for these poor people, when you recollect that all the universe had been eating without forks from the time of the creation till the reign of Queen Elizabeth of England, scarcely two centuries since. But the truth is, the manners of different nations are equally repugnant to each other. Sufficient instances have been adduced to convince you of that fact; but it may not be amiss to exhibit a few more in contrast with each other, to give you a still better insight into Indian customs.

The climate and the ordinances of the Hindoo religion require him to bathe very frequently. This is not the case with us, and by the mode of bathing of the two races, we may readily perceive that the one is a nation of bathers, and the other unaccustomed to the practice. Hindoo men and women go down to the river-side almost promiscuously, and are seen

bathing together, but all decently dressed; and such is the propriety with which they change their long loose garments, which wrap round them without tying or buttoning, that you can hardly perceive them engaged in the operation. How different is the case with Europeans in general!!! They also go to the rivers in India to bathe; but stripping off their dress, they run about literally naked, without any sense of shame, exhibiting a scene disgusting even to men, but of course quite intolerable for females to witness. I have heard the natives frequently speak with horror of this indecent practice among our common soldiers, and they have often asked me if European females ever bathe, or whether when they do, they are not more decent? I have been obliged to say, our European females whenever they do bathe, remain in their own houses, or use bathing dresses suited to the occasion.

Again, with what horror a Mahomedan would learn that it is the practice to grease our heads with a preparation of hogs-lard, and yet it would be difficult for a European to enter into those feelings which would condemn him for the use of simple pomatum. At the same time, the natives of India have no objection to their women having their hair anointed with oils highly scented with jessamine, roses or sandal, which, on the other hand, are disagreeable to us.

You cannot yet enter into the feelings of an Indian stranger in witnessing our festivities, of which dancing and drinking wine form essential parts. None but the most abandoned debauchees of either sex ever drink wine, and dancing woman and prostitute are synonymous terms. Yet the natives come to our government-houses, and witness our men and women of the first rank mixing together at the festive board, eating flesh of all kinds, from that of the cow to that of the hog; drinking freely of wine, and to crown all, assembling in another room afterwards for the express purpose of dancing and exhibiting their persons to advantage*. This habit too, not confined to the very youngest portion of the society, is participated in by the grave matron, the mother of half a dozen children, as well as by the warrior, the statesman, the judge, and the divine. No wonder the Persian ambassador on first witnessing a ball at Bombay, after seeing one dance, and perceiving the ladies about to commence another, observed, with great politeness, turning round to the governor, that he hoped they would not put themselves to any more trouble on his account.

* The horror and astonishment of some Turks of distinction on seeing the European ambassadors and their wives dance at Constantinople, in the year 1755, is well described in the "Mémoires du Baron de Tott, sur les Turcs et les Tartares."—Hamburg Edition. Tom. I. p. 9.

I have already noticed the aversion the natives have to any thing being touched by the tongue. They have no less a dislike also to dogs, an animal which both Mahomedans and Hindoos consider unclean. The habit therefore of allowing dogs to follow you into any public office where natives are likely to be seated, or permitting them to lick your hand, much less your face, are practices grossly repugnant to their feelings; and yet how often is this done by us, without being aware of the disgust it occasions to the individuals whom it is not our intention or wish to offend. In the course of time the public servants employed under us, and who are all disposed to make every allowance for the difference of our habits, become gradually reconciled to them. As both become better acquainted, they make mutual allowances for each other, and at length begin to feel that neither ought to be offended at a custom because it is different from their own, even though it should be at variance with their notions of propriety. The ultimate result of long intercourse between the native and the European at length begets something like mutual attachment; but at the very period when they have become sufficiently acquainted to be of benefit to each other, and when confidence is established, the European quits India for England, and in a few years almost forgets that he was ever there. This would not be the case if young

Englishmen on going to India would enter the country devoid of prejudice, and with a determination to feel an interest in all they see and in that with which they come in contact. Their anxiety to obtain information would soon ensure it, and before they had been long enough in the country to hold any office of trust or importance, they would have qualified themselves for the task, instead of having to learn their duties as at present after they are placed in office.

To afford you, in a few months, that sort of information so absolutely requisite to every Indian public servant, which I have acquired in the course of many years, is the principal object of these letters; and if I find you disposed to benefit by them, I shall continue to address you on subjects connected with the different branches of the service into which you may enter. In the mean time I shall be anxious to see you, and if after a few months, when you have passed your examination in the languages, you should be able to obtain leave, I hope you will pay me a visit.

I do not quite approve of your purchasing so dear a horse as that "Burgundy" you mention in your last letter. You had already one and a pony. What you can require with a race-horse for which you have to pay two hundred and fifty pounds, I am at a loss to know. All I can tell you is, the race-course is not the road to distinction in your

profession, and if you follow that amusement at such a time, I shall despair of ever seeing you an eminent public servant. Though, with the talents you have, I have little doubt of your making a very distinguished member of a turf-club, if your ambition lies in that line; yet I shall certainly regret that I have thrown away so much time unprofitably in talking to you of matters not in that department.

Yours, etc.

103205

LETTER XIV.

Satâra.

MY DEAR GEORGE,

ALTHOUGH I have stated that the conduct, and I might say also the dress, of our females in public is shocking to the eyes of a native of the East, the observation was merely made to exhibit the opposition of the manners and customs of the Eastern and Western hemispheres, without at all meaning to impeach the propriety of our own, or to uphold those of the East. I am prepared to admit with you at once the incomparable superiority in every respect of our ladies to the Eastern females, the upper classes in particular. Well may it be so, when it is notorious that, with the exception of public dancers, no females in India are instructed in the art of reading and writing, with the exception of some rare instances we sometimes hear of, and one or two of whom we read. Such, for instance, as the elegant and accomplished daughter of Aurengzeeb, whose beautiful marble mausoleum is one of the most interesting objects in the Deccan. But this state of ignorance to which the Indian females are subjected does not necessarily debase their minds, nor prevent their being influenced by

the noblest feelings; nor does it hinder their possessing great and commanding influence over their husbands, and sometimes over governments. Of all the eminent women I recollect, Ehlya Bye, the regent of the Holkar estates, and of whom such an interesting life is given by Sir John Malcolm, is the most remarkable; and if the character drawn by that powerful writer be near the truth, (and certainly all concurring testimony of the present day seems to confirm it,) this extraordinary female possessed a mind not inferior to that of our Queen Elizabeth in political talent, and was more amiable and natural in her private conduct.

The preponderating influence of Hindoo ladies at the courts of the Peshwas is a matter of interesting historical record, and shews that although they did not usually mix in general society, yet their power over the stronger sex was by no means trifling. The strength of mind and the high notions of family pride which prevail among the Indian females, may well excite our wonder and admiration. The circumstance of self-immolation, so frequent among them, may be quoted as one of many instances of this nature.

The high spirit of the Raj-poots has been already adverted to. This feeling pervades the women as well as the men, and some remarkable instances occur in the Mahomedan annals, not the most likely depositories to contain accounts of the Hindoo virtues. I have somewhere read of one of

the princesses of Joudpoor, whose husband and son had gone forth with their clan to defend their territory. A desperate battle was fought, in which her husband and a very large proportion of his blood-relatives fell; while her son, a youth of sixteen, with a portion of the household troops, escaped from the field, and brought the sad accounts to his mother. This high-spirited female, embracing the dead corpse of her husband, said that he indeed had died like a true Raj-poot; but on her son approaching she said, "begone, dastard, you are some impostor; my son would not have survived such a father and all his gallant relatives." With a magnanimity consistent with the rest of her conduct, she ordered preparations for the funeral pile, and ascended it with the body of her husband and perished. Other instances are recorded of females perishing by each other's hands, when their castles were stormed and all hope was lost, rather than be subject to the indignity of being made prisoners. A case of this nature occurred not many years ago, in the assault made on a Hindoo fortress by the French, under the command of M. Bussy.

While on the subject of females, I cannot help remarking to you, how imprudent (to call it by no other name) is the conduct of some young men on their first arrival in the country towards this class of the community, and to what unpleasant and frequently fatal consequences their behaviour leads. I

know an instance of a gentleman who succeeded by money in seducing away a young woman from her house to his own, during the absence of her husband; the intrigue was carried on for some time with success, till at length her brother, having his suspicions, waylaid her one night and cut off her nose. The result was, of course, that the young man felt himself bound to provide for her, and as she was a person of respectability, it became incumbent on him to provide for her in a manner which proved a burthen to him through life. It is creditable to the individual, however, that he never suffered her to want. Another melancholy instance occurred, which terminated more fatally for both parties. A young civilian was in the habit of bowing and making signs to almost all the females he happened to see in houses as he passed along the streets, though frequently warned of the cruelty and injustice of such conduct towards respectable women. This behaviour would not for a moment be tolerated in Europe, nor would it have been adopted by any person who did not hold the natives in India in too low estimation to consider their feelings worthy of regard. The vast distance which Europeans usually maintain between themselves and the natives, is sufficient to shew how impossible it is that any intercourse, except for the worst of purposes, can exist between them and their women; so that to display openly any degree of intimacy or even acquaintance must tend to ruin

their character, and frequently lead to events like that which I am now about to relate.

The young civilian to whom I alluded, was deputed into the interior of a province for the purpose of bringing to a conclusion a long pending dispute regarding some land, the right of which had been submitted to the arbitration of the neighbouring landholders. He had not been many days in the principal town of the district before he discovered that the roof of the house in which he resided overlooked that of one of his neighbours, a Raj-poot of some consideration, and the eyes of the civilian fell on his wife, a handsome young woman, to whom her husband was fondly attached. This object no sooner attracted his attention than he laid himself out to seduce her; but as he had no opportunity of speaking to her, he endeavoured to communicate with her by signs and gestures. These were observed by some of the neighbours, who, as it afterwards appeared, mentioned the circumstance to her husband. The young civilian being already notorious for his licentious character, the Raj-poot easily gave credit to the report, and determined to observe the conduct of his wife narrowly, but he could discover nothing improper. One day, however, he saw the civilian on the terrace of his house making the usual signs and laughing in a direction where his wife was, and on the following morning she was found dead. The husband made no secret of the share he had in

her murder, and confessed he had been her executioner to preserve his own honour and his wife's character. Measures were taken for apprehending him, and it became the duty of the civilian in his capacity as magistrate to superintend, not only the inquest that sat on the body, but to take the confessions of the husband. It were needless to attempt to describe his feelings, for, excepting in the instances of folly and vanity he evinced towards the female sex, he was a young man of correct notions of propriety, and possessed of a just sense of honour. The unhappy Raj-poot was remanded for trial till the sessions, which came on some months afterwards. Meanwhile the image of the murdered female constantly haunted the European youth who had been the wanton cause of her death, and his health and spirits gradually declined. At length the Raj-poot was tried, convicted on his own confession, and sentenced to be hanged. At the same time he pleaded in palliation the conduct of the European, who was not only obliged to attend during the whole trial, but it so happened that he was compelled, for want of another person, to superintend the execution. This was more than his feelings could bear; but he wound himself up to perform the melancholy duty, after which, returning home, he sought relief from the pangs of his conscience by putting a pistol to his head and at once terminating his worldly misery and existence.

I have heard of several instances of women suddenly disappearing who have been suspected of carrying on intrigues with European gentlemen. What must be the feelings of that man who can deliberately involve an unhappy female in such a catastrophe, when perhaps in truth there has been on her part no criminality whatever! What must be the feelings of the community at large, when they perceive their European superiors availing themselves of their power and rank to insult the people instead of protecting them! That such is not often the case, I do firmly believe, and that instances such as I have alluded to are rare I do as conscientiously hope and trust; but I have adduced two particular examples which may serve to shew how careful we should be before we wantonly insult the feelings of a high-minded people.

Yours, etc.

LETTER XV.

Satâra.

MY DEAR GEORGE,

I AM glad to hear of your safe arrival without any other accidents, and I most sincerely congratulate you and your chum on the circumstance of the servant's recovery, a subject on which I will not wound your feelings by dwelling unnecessarily. The accident might have happened to any one under a similar delusion, but it only serves to shew forcibly the necessity of being more cautious, and at all events of becoming acquainted with native manners as soon as possible. If I understand you, you are to be attached to the office of Mr. G., the collector, till you have completed your first course of study, and I think you should make great sacrifices of parties of pleasure, particularly during the day-time, for the sake of prosecuting them. I will allow you your mornings before breakfast, and your afternoons after sunset for exercise, and also your evenings altogether if you require them; but the heat of the day should positively be devoted to your moonshy. I must protest against morning visits, and hot tiffins or luncheon, where people

meet together, principally ladies and idle young men, and the chief amusement beyond that of eating and sometimes of drinking pretty copiously, is that of discussing the qualities (need I say the bad ones?) of their neighbours. After repletion in a sultry day the body requires rest, and the remainder of the afternoon is devoted to sleep. I do think nothing is so abominable as these habits, and I am quite convinced from a very, very long experience, that nothing is so unwholesome to the body or pernicious to the mind, so I pray you do not let me hear of such idle customs, or I shall despair of you altogether. They not only insensibly lead to confirm laziness, but tend to produce all sorts of bilious complaints, and render the mind as sickly as the frame.

Unlike that of Europe, the Indian climate, at no season of the year, admits of Europeans being abroad during the day without danger, or with any tolerable convenience: you have probably discovered this long before now. So that confining yourself to the house while the sun is abroad, so far from being a hardship, is in fact a privilege, which the civil service and all men of business possess, more than military men, who, while in the field, are frequently exposed to the extreme of heat and to chilly damp nights, which cause so many casualties in our armies from sickness.

While you are not absolutely employed with your

moonshy, I would recommend you to devote part of your time to the steady perusal of the records of Mr. G.'s office for the last two or three years, and it will be an advantage to you if you should be allowed to correct the fair copies of letters going out, and to make short abstracts, as it is customary to do, of letters received into the office. You will by these means gradually obtain an insight into the current business, and qualify yourself to assist in it, when your knowledge of the language enables you to become useful by making translations of the several native papers which are daily received. I know young men in general consider these duties extremely irksome as well as unimportant, and I am aware that the usual practice is for them to avoid the collector's office till they are qualified to translate, and then they are often so dilatory as to render it better for the collector to make the translations himself. Some assistants seem determined to do nothing as long as they are in subordinate situations, the result of which is, that they continue the longer incapacitated from employment of responsibility.

You observe that you feel an awkwardness in not knowing what sort of reception to give to persons of different classes with whom you may occasionally have business. The very question and hesitation on your part infers a wish to be instructed, and I consider this as a favourable indication of approach-

ing conciliation to the natives. You have been told already that the Bramins compose the order of priesthood, and if I were to say the clergy, perhaps I should not be very wrong, as they are in fact the only class, the whole of whom read and write. Of these there are many sects, none of which intermarry, and some will not even eat with others. From their superior education and intelligence, we find them filling almost all the civil offices of the Hindoo, and even of the Mahomedan governments. They are usually the ministers of finance and of negociation in the latter, but they fill all civil stations and even some military stations under the former. Under the British government, if we except the army, they fill the whole of the appointments which such natives are eligible to hold. In business they are shrewd and intelligent, fond of obtaining money, and not in general scrupulous as to the method of acquiring it, the natural consequence of persons holding situations of great trust, and being inadequately paid. In their persons they are cleanly, in their manners mild, and it rarely happens they are provoked to be guilty of any rudeness. It is clear from the station these people hold in society, they have a right to expect not only civility, but even some attention, such as that of being allowed to sit when spoken to or sent for on duty, and not kept waiting outside of the house, as I have sometimes seen them, for whole hours together. I need hardly warn you against

making use of coarse language to them, after the examples I have shewn of the great offence it gives to persons of less pretensions. There is one peculiarity among Bramins which is inconvenient, but not unnatural, viz. their great desire to screen each other, and the propensity you will find in them to promote persons of their own tribe, though perhaps not very well known to them, in preference to others with higher claims. It is proper we should be aware of these facts; because, in situations where we may have to employ public servants, we should be careful to prevent this partiality being too much practised.

In the second class we may reckon the hereditary Hindoo chiefs, some of whom, with small estates not worth more than three or four thousand pounds a year, trace a pedigree of two or three centuries, during which time the estate has perhaps descended in the same family without interruption. These chiefs, as may well be supposed, are extremely proud of their ancestry, and in the Deccan particularly they formed the feudal nobility of the Marratta government. On their estates they had the power of life and death, and with the exception of maintaining a body of troops at the *presence*, and being bound to attend the prince when called on, they were in other respects independent. These estates were held of the state, but were liable to a considerable fine, equal to about one year's revenue

on the renewal of the patent to heirs on the death of the proprietor. Feudal chieftains of this description, I imagine, once existed in all parts of India, under every native government. They have for the most part disappeared as we obtained possession, because we suffer the estate to lapse to government on failure of heirs, instead of granting them to new families. These persons are those whose importance and influence have met with such humiliation under us, and yet such families are in most governments the main source of strength, and calculated both to support or to subvert them. In some instances, owing to mismanagement, some of these estates are so involved in debt, that the chiefs are unable to pay their quota of troops; yet such is the family pride, that sooner than reduce their outward state, I have known the chief himself with hardly clothes to his back, and frequently without the means of feeding his own family for a day, when his banker has refused him credit and the shopkeepers to supply him with food. It is this description of persons especially that demand our consideration, and I do not envy the man his feelings who would willingly deny it them; for surely every motive of generosity should induce us to pay the members of such families respect, even if policy did not enjoin it. Besides these chiefs, we often meet with Mahomedans and Hindoos descended from celebrated men under the native governments who have fallen into distress,

and who are equally deserving of our pity and attention.

Among the third class, which includes merchants, mechanics, and tradesmen in general, so much must depend on individual character and wealth, that it is impossible to give you any particular rule for your conduct towards them. It may happen that one day a man keeps a little stall and retails his goods, and in the course of a few years we may find the same person a wealthy banker and merchant, perhaps conducting the whole finance of an empire, and entitled by his affluence and station to rank among men of the first family. I should observe, however, that no circumstance enables a man to elevate himself from one caste to another, nor is it possible for him to marry any woman but of his own tribe; so that in this respect wealth does not confer the importance nor possess the value which it does in all other countries where the distinctions of caste are unknown. On a par with mechanics and tradesmen may be reckoned the small landed proprietors, all of whom should be allowed to sit on the ground if they have any thing to say. It is a common saying with the natives, that "no man "can give an opinion or support it standing"; the meaning of which is simply, that every one who is qualified to give an opinion and to support it, should in the first place be treated with so much consideration as to obtain a seat, a civility which the natives

themselves deny to none but menials and outcasts. It is certainly a misfortune that any society should exist in which one class of men are deemed so far beneath the community as to be thought impure and unclean to the touch; but until we can abolish caste altogether, and as long as we respect the institution in the Indian society, we cannot hope or expect to elevate the outcasts in putting ourselves on a footing with them by eating of the food they have prepared, or by allowing them to be in constant contact with our persons. The result is remarkably exemplified in several instances, and we frequently ensure respect more by avoiding this race than by the influence of our individual characters.

The Portuguese is the nation of all others which has endeavoured most to level all distinctions of castes, and in spite of the great achievements of their illustrious commanders and governors, in former times, there is certainly no race held in lower estimation in India, although many of them have become naturalized and have passed many generations in the East without returning to the land of their ancestors. All Europeans are more or less held in contempt on the same account; but in Bengal, where the English have so far imbibed the native prejudices as not to allow men of low caste to enter their armies or to attend their persons, we find they meet with much more respect there than at either of the other Presidencies. In Ma-

dras where the Pariah servants are abundant and excellent for hard work, but disreputable on account of their habits, the stain of contamination in a great degree attaches to their masters wherever they go. Among military men, perhaps, this freedom from the pollution of outcast servants is not of so great consequence; but among civilians who are obliged to mix so much with the bulk of the community, and whose business is transacted principally by Bramins, the importance of not having outcasts about them or in the interior of the house and public offices is worthy of notice. It is rather remarkable that this subject has met with so little attention, for though we have acted the part of conquerors wherever we have gone to war, yet we have certainly effected as much by our policy and by negociation as by the sword; and indeed it would be preposterous for a moment to suppose that we owe our present possessions to any thing but our moral power. The Mahomedans, who it seems entered India sword in hand, with the avowed intention not only of conquest but of universal conversion, found it easier to subdue the physical than the moral strength of the Hindoos, and were eventually compelled to forego their design of making proselytes, or of interfering in their distinction of castes.

In the course of time the Mahomedans themselves became a distinct caste, adopting the same rules towards the outcast as the Hindoos in general,

by which regulation (although their power like that of the Portuguese is nearly subverted in every part of India), the respectability of the Mahomedan name and character is maintained. When I lay such stress on this subject, I do not mean to prejudice you against these poor people as men. They form a very important and valuable portion of every village society. They are the watchmen, the guides, the porters, the ferrymen, and the police, and are an intelligent race in their particular callings. But the frame of Indian society, while it exists as it is at present, seems to require that the distinction should be preserved as much with them as with the other classes, which we never think of elevating out of their stations. Only imagine, for instance, a magistrate sending an outcast with his badge of office into the house of a Bramin, to deliver a summons requiring his attendance in his court. The consequence would be, that the house must undergo a thorough cleansing from the pollution of his foot having passed the threshold, and the Bramin himself, if touched, would probably have to perform a penance, and pay some fee to the temple, before he could be admitted to enter it. A magistrate, therefore, who wanted to ruin or persecute any particular individual, might do it by merely requiring his frequent attendance in court. From the knowledge our judges and magistrates, and most civilians who have resided many

years in the country, have of the aversion which the Hindoos feel towards the outcasts, there is little danger of any of the public servants being of this caste, yet it not unfrequently happens that young men like yourself, whom the natives see are training to become magistrates and rulers over them, commit very offensive mistakes. I have more than once seen young men (Europeans) both of the military and civil service, after admiring the agility and elasticity of the limbs of strolling tumblers, both male and female, a class for the most part of the lowest description and of the most profligate habits, go up and caress them, and begin talking and laughing with the females in a manner equally indelicate and improper, and in the eyes of a native of respectability positively disgusting. But without being aware of these distinctions, how is it possible for young men to discriminate? and even when they are, how few pay such attention to appearances as to observe them?

Yours, etc.

LETTER XVI.

Satâra.

MY DEAR GEORGE,

I AM glad to hear you have adopted my advice in abjuring the mid-day meal we call tiffin, and substituting a good long lesson of Hindoostany, by which, rely on it, you will both preserve your health and improve your mind. To these little refections, as they are inconsiderately termed, succeed languor and lethargy, which produce sleep, lay the foundation of the remittent fevers and liver complaints, which send to the grave so many of our countrymen who come to this climate.

I am happy to hear of the progress you have made in perusing the official records of the collector, and that Mr. G. has assigned to you the duty at your own request, of correcting the letters dispatched, and of abstracting for the indices the contents of those received. Independently of the information you will derive from this occupation, it will teach you steady habits and lead you imperceptibly to be methodical, without which it is impossible you can ever hope to become a good man of business. Mr. G. gives a very favourable ac-

count of you upon the whole, though he observes you are a little too fond of hunting, and laments that your associates are not altogether so steady as he could wish them. The very fact of your giving over your horse Burgundy to Captain P. to train for you, is I hope a symptom of your resolution not to engage very deeply in the races; and I should not be surprised, nay, indeed I trust to hear of your parting with your blood-horse to pay off old debts, and avoid new ones. As for your hunting, if it does not encroach more on your time than one day in the week, I willingly give it up to you, provided you are not too free in your living the while, and that you abstain from the card-table at night. Of these two habits I will never hear with patience, and from the moment you adopt them, I despair of making any thing of you. I am not quite sure that I approve of your living with your chum Mr. T. I never had much opinion of him from the day I heard of his beating his servant so severely on the road, which, to say the least of it, was cruel; and as it turned out to have been an error on his part of the posture which the servant assumed as one of respect, and which the master mistook for an insolent one, the act was less justifiable. I hear a great deal of this young man, but, I am sorry to say, not much to his credit. Is it true that he has four horses to run at the next races? and that he keeps altogether seven, including hunters and gig-

horses? If so, and he has no independent fortune of his own, I neither envy him his pleasures nor his principle. He is, I hear, also a regular frequenter of the nocturnal parties maintained at the house of Major B., where good fellows who have nothing better to do with their money can spend it either at the gaming-table, or lavish it in purchasing the smiles of such persons as F——y and R——y. If this sort of dissipation does not lead to loss of health, and eventually curtail the period of existence in India, as much as in Europe, the fault is not in the young men who adopt it. Unfortunately I am afraid the course of dissipation in this country is much shorter, and many a youth is cut off within three or four years of his arrival, without exhibiting a warning to his associates, who console themselves with the idea, that fever and liver complaints are incident to the climate, and that any other disease which they may happen to contract is equally common to the West as to the East. If Mr. T. continues the course he is now pursuing, there is a hope of his quitting your house for that of some one whose habits are more congenial to his own, unless, indeed, he perceives in time the evil consequences of the line he is pursuing, and reforms before it is too late.

Yours, etc.

LETTER XVII.

Satâra.

MY DEAR GEORGE,

It is my melancholy duty to impart to you the news of poor T.'s death in my house. I had not much hope from the day he arrived; but the doctor was not aware that the symptoms of which he complained arose from such a complication of disease as on opening him proved to be the case. Three weeks have elapsed since he first arrived here; and although he was for some time occasionally in better spirits, the attacks of fever always subdued them, and for two or three days after each he appeared quite exhausted, and no sooner rallied again, than he got a relapse, after being better for only a day or two.

The doctors treated his case as fever; concluding that after the quantity of calomel he had already taken, if any tendency to fever existed it would have been effectually removed. They now find, however, that both his liver and lungs were severely affected, and that this disease was the exciting cause of fever, the relapses of which they conceive were usually brought on by his own imprudence.

However, no more of that; he appeared a fine young man, but his irritability (natural enough in any sick person) towards his servants, was beyond belief, and they felt his severity so much, that all but one positively refused to attend him; and that man, as you must be aware, was necessarily obliged to be absent two or three hours at a time to prepare his own food. All his domestics, to the number of fifteen, including his horsekeepers and grasscutters, say, they are nearly three months' pay in arrear, though their master received his salary monthly; and now he is no more it is difficult to contradict them, especially as we have not been able to find any thing like an account for the last four or five months, excepting what is exhibited by his butler, who had nominally charge of his money, and who states he has claims for nearly 1000 rupees on his master's estate.

The only thing like an account among his papers is a statement drawn up in his own hand of his concerns. This makes out that he has owing to him, on account of gambling debts, about 3000 rupees (£300), against which are set off 5000 rupees, which he owes, and which are to be paid the first thing. Besides this sum, there appear to be from the last account current of —— and Co. in July last, upwards of 60,000 rupees (£6000) due by him to the house on account of money borrowed at different times, with interest at 9 per cent.; but the

firm is tolerably safe, as they compelled T. to insure his life at 3 per cent. per annum for the principal, before the cash was advanced. This rate of interest, exorbitant as it is, is better than the system of borrowing from the natives, which formerly prevailed in some parts of India.

It is difficult to say how our young friend T. was to have overcome all the difficulties which he had brought on himself in so short a time. Little used to have the command of money, or to be his own master, the emancipation from all control seems to have been too much for his weak mind to bear, and he appears to have thought that the world was made alone for him to figure in. Alas! "how short a day of sunny bliss" was his, and from what I have heard from yourself and others, and even from himself, I cannot but think that he fell a victim entirely to his own dissipation. His property, including his horses, we calculate here will not bring much more than £600 or £700 at the utmost, while his debts will not be much short of £7000.

On the day before he died he put a packet of letters into my hand which he begged me to seal in his presence, and which he caused to be directed to Miss P., —— Grove, near ————, Kent; to whom he begged they might be sent, with an apology for his not being able to write to her, but he had the pen and ink brought to him, and wrote within

the packet before it was sealed "*To my Maria, from her affectionate W. T.*" On the following day he talked very incoherently, sometimes speaking of his mother and sisters in terms of affection, and at others of his "*Maria.*" The scene of the packet was the last symptom he evinced of sanity, he was much affected on seeing it sealed, and sunk into a sort of lethargic sleep. I left him in hopes he might get better, but was called to his bed-side during the night by the doctor. The paroxysm of fever had returned, and delirium shortly after succeeded, in which state he continued till he breathed his last, about noon.

I have entered more fully into these particulars than would otherwise be necessary, because, as you knew his family in England, you may be able to afford them the melancholy consolation of his death scene, in which all the best feelings of his nature were revived. Our friend Mr. W. arrived the day before his death, and we persuaded him to take the sacrament, which he did. He was more composed afterwards, and in about an hour from that time he sent for me, and gave me the packet I have mentioned, which, however, he had already bound together with a bit of tape, and these letters seem to have been the only papers at all arranged. He left no will, and on my asking if he had any other bequests to make, he said, "if my creditors will allow it, I should like my watch and seals to be sent to

my mother." This we can contrive to do by buying it at the sale of his effects.

It is truly pitiable to see a fine young man snatched off in this way in early life, though, unless he had altogether reformed, which seemed by no means likely, it is difficult to imagine how he could ever have gotten out of debt; and, under all circumstances, his death perhaps saved him from the risk of a total abandonment of principle, and of engaging in transactions discreditable to himself, and reflecting disgrace on his family.

Yours, etc.

LETTER XVIII.

Satâra.

MY DEAR GEORGE,

I NOW propose to answer your last letter, in which you are so anxious to know something of the agriculturists, and of the manners of the inhabitants in villages. There is no doubt that as much difference prevails between the people of the cities and villages in India as in Europe, and you can scarcely judge of the latter by such intercourse as you have had with the former. In the towns, custom and our ignorance of the language render it unusual, I had almost said impossible, for Europeans of respectability to go through the streets on foot unattended and to visit the different shops to make purchases as in Europe. Here our servants procure every thing for us. We may regulate the quantity and quality of each article we require from the bazar, and we may send for goods, which the merchants in most cases are willing to bring and exhibit; but this sort of intercourse is insufficient to afford us an insight into the peculiarities of the inhabitants, with whom circumstances of caste, as much as disinclination, prevent us from associating.

Among the peasantry, as soon as they have con-

fidence and you can talk to them, you will find a vast number of intelligent and respectable farmers, mostly with small capital to be sure, and consequently slender means of improving their lands, but none of them ignorant of the advantages of manure, irrigation, succession of crops, and the proper methods of clearing from weeds and noxious grasses land which has been ill cultivated or long neglected. Although all the agriculture of the dry grain crops is conducted by the ox, and the wet * crops by the buffalo, yet you will observe with surprise the facility with which one man will drive several, and the wonderful docility of these animals. Like cattle in Europe, each has its name, and performs its duty with as much spririt and as much sagacity as an English horse. Among the agricultural implements too, though simple in their construction, you will find the drill-plough, the ox-hoe, the scuffler, scarifier, roller, and bush-harrow in common use, all of which have probably been employed from time immemorial. In going into the village threshing floors, wherein all the grain of very small villages is usually brought, you will perceive the different modes of threshing or treading out the grain; you will learn the purposes to which the stalks or straw of each is applied, and what

* Rice is one of the wet crops, from its growing in fields kept continually under water till the grain begins to ripen.

are the most advantageous mixtures of chaff composition, a fodder which they find both economical and nutritious for cattle in the dry season when the grass fails. Now although you may not have any taste for acquiring this information, it is unfortunately too necessary for every man who professes to assess land, and to make remissions on bad crops, to be well acquainted with much of the practical advantages or disadvantages of the agriculturist. In connexion with this subject, and one which should attract your attention, is that of markets and fairs.

In every district or county of one hundred or one hundred and fifty towns or villages there are from ten to fifteen denominated kusbas or market towns in which they have one, two, or more market days, as it may happen, weekly; and in cities there are special markets on particular days in different parts of the town, and that quarter of the city in which each is held is usually called after that day, as we should say Monday parish, Tuesday parish, &c. to denote the day of the week the market is kept in each parish. These markets, as in England, do not preclude a market being held every day also, but the wholesale price of one market day seems to be the standard by which goods are retailed till the next.

Besides the markets, there are annual or half-yearly fairs, held in commemoration of some par-

ticular event connected with the town or city, or in honour of some local deity or shrine. These fairs present a very good sample of the manners of the lower orders, and will, I have no doubt, excite a good deal of interest. You will be equally surprised and entertained, I think, at witnessing on these occasions a spectacle so nearly resembling similar sights in England.

The festival seems to level much of the distinctions of caste, and the separation of the sexes. Booths are erected on each side of a wide street, formed for the occasion on some common, or perhaps the dry part of the bed of a broad river, for the better display of articles of sale. Here may be seen, exhibited at the same time, the silks of China and the broad cloth of Europe, the dried fruits and other productions of Cashmeer and Persia, and the several manufactures of India. Here, as in England, may be seen also, all sorts of amusements calculated to please youth, as well as toys of every description, from the squeaking penny trumpet, the tinsel sword and gun, down to dolls and kings and queens, displayed in gorgeous array in cakes, composed of sugar instead of gingerbread. At one place may be seen tigers and other wild beasts become domesticated, while the facetious and mischievous monkey, riding on a goat by way of a charger, is always present where fun is to be looked for. At another are jugglers, mountebanks, and stage-

players in all directions, with puppet-shows, and the attractive ups and downs and round-abouts, at a halfpenny for twenty turns, filled with giggling girls and awkward clowns, at one moment laughing wildly, at another screaming with affected apprehension as they ascend the air in their little swinging boxes. On the outskirts of the crowd are the markets for corn, cattle, sheep, and horses, and last, though not the least important branch of the ceremony, is the approach of the gigantic Hindoo car, thirty feet in height, with wheels of proportionate dimensions. Within this vehicle is seated the idol, the object of the anniversary, which is seen advancing slowly through the main street, covered with gold cloths and flowers, and drawn by several hundred persons, who think it an act of devotion to put a hand to the labour of dragging this huge moving temple. On these occasions decrepit old men or women, tired of life, voluntarily sacrifice themselves, by allowing the wheels to pass over them. The occurrence, however, is becoming more rare daily, and the march of intellect will, I have no doubt, in the course of time, tend altogether to do away the practice.

It is sometimes asserted that our government should interpose to put a stop to this last proceeding. Bigotry is easily alarmed at the idea of persecution, and if such a notion were once to gain ground in India, it is difficult to say where the consequences

might end. The very idea of prohibition would probably excite a vast number more to sacrifice themselves than before, not only as devotees to the deity, but as martyrs to uphold their religious prejudices; and where one victim is now occasionally heard of, fifty would then take place. In case of any attempt to put it down by force (and the only practicable way of doing so would be by prohibiting the procession altogether, or by accompanying the car with armed men,) the cry of "Religion is in danger" would everywhere be heard; advantage would be taken of the circumstance by designing people; disaffection to our government would perhaps, after spreading from one class to another, communicate to our troops, and bring the ill effects of our interference before us in a shape and at a time when it might be as dangerous to prosecute the measure of prevention, as it would then be difficult or impolitic to recede from it.

It is not many years since the whole of the Madras army, 40,000 strong, was in a state of ferment not easily to be described, and to those persons who witnessed the events, they appeared, at the time, almost incredible. The commander-in-chief, desirous of improving the appearance of the troops, wished to effect it by an alteration of dress; and after consulting with his staff, a new code of regulations was drawn up, by which marks of caste and the ear-rings worn by some classes

were ordered to be discontinued. They were not aware that the latter appendages, which are by no means unseemly, and which gave no offence in the French army to Buonaparte, were worn by the Mahomedans not merely as ornaments, but in token of devotion, as slaves to the shrine of some particular saint, to whom vows had been offered up for the fulfilment of objects which had been attained *. Not only were marks of caste forbidden, but, to crown all, a cap, unlike those formerly in use, and assimilating to that of the European soldier, was ordered to be worn. These orders were promulgated throughout the army at the same time, and measures were taken to carry them into immediate effect. One of the native regiments at Madras refused to adopt the new regulations, and a prompt example being instantly made of the ringleaders, the regiment was sent out of Madras by way of disgrace to the garrison of Vellore. About the same time reports arrived from all parts, at the distance of several hundred miles, of the disaffection produced by the new orders, and on the 10th of July, 1806, the

* The custom of piercing the ear for a ring is of great antiquity in the East. It is mentioned in chap. xxi. v. 6. of Exodus. Also by Xenophon Sympos. lib. ii. chap. i. At the present day, when the Persians mean to say, a person is wholly devoted to another, they use the phrase, "He wears his ring in his ear."

garrison of Vellore, consisting of two native regiments, rose on that portion of it composed of Europeans, being six companies of his Majesty's 69th regiment, and not only massacred a large proportion of them, but also many even of their own officers.

The fury which prevailed among the native soldiery was as sudden as it was unexpected, and the numerous instances of the closest ties of affection between the officers and men being thus torn asunder, affords an example of what these infatuated and high-spirited people may be driven to, when apprehensive of interference with their castes. One instance occurs to me of a young European officer, who had patronised a youth in his regiment, whose mother had been his wet nurse, and who in infancy had been brought up with him. On the return of the officer from England, whither he had been as usual sent for his education, his foster-brother became the object of his care, and was promoted to the rank of corporal. The European officer it seems had been naturally anxious to see the orders of the commander-in-chief supported, and took some pains to impress on the minds of his men their paramount duty to the government in obeying them. On the fatal day when the Sepoys were in the act of shooting their superiors, the European officer above alluded to, on seeing his foster-brother, turned to some other officers and said, "Oh! thank God we are safe now I see my cor-

poral," and hailing him, called on him to afford him his protection, and ran towards him. But the young soldier, forgetful of all ties but those which bound him to his caste, levelled his piece, and shot his benefactor to the heart. In those days I was also called on to use my influence to reconcile the men to the new dress, and having missed the visits of a lad who had been attached to me some years before as a bat-man, before he was fit to join the regiment, I spoke to him on the subject. From being the most respectful and gentle of human beings, a sense of general danger had entirely changed his nature; he was sullen in his replies to my questions; and on my asking him what objection there was to the new TURBAN—"Turban do you call it?" said he, "it is no turban—it is a European hat, and I will sooner die than wear it." We should be cautious therefore how we rouse those feverish feelings of jealousy towards our rule, which it cannot be denied is alive in the breast of every man of rank and respectability in the country, though it be allowed that, on the whole, our administration is better adapted for the happiness of the body of the people, than any purely Indian government which might succeed us.

The danger of any encroachment on their religious feelings or articles of faith presents itself to my mind in any attempt of the legislature to do away, by one general edict, the self-immolation of

widows, which you hold in such horror and execration. On entering on this subject many considerations occur, such as the practicability, the policy, and the justice of our interference. With regard to the practicability of the measure of preventing suicide, it is one which all governments would wish to effect; and the English legislature, if the act be not repealed, denies to every person guilty of self-murder Christian burial, and requires his corpse to be interred in a cross road, with a stake run through it. The general feeling of the nation at present is against this statute, and the consequence is, that suicide is so far tolerated that coroner's inquests generally return a verdict of insanity, in order to evade the operation of this law. To prohibit the self-immolation of widows in public might compel them to have recourse to a more sinister mode of effecting the same end; and the same motive (that of being united, after death, for ever with the beloved object of her affections) would equally sustain the constancy of the Hindoo widow in taking poison, and calling her friends around her to witness her death, as at present supports her on the funeral pile. The gratuitous intervention of the government to save her life would thus effectually be baffled. Force does not therefore seem available to attain the desired object. The policy of the measure may be equally questionable. We are told that under some of the Mahomedan

rulers the practice was disallowed, though I know no authority for the assertion; but there is a wide difference from denying privileges to a conquered people, still crouching beneath the edge of the sword, and that of attempting to abolish in a moment, throughout a great empire, a practice to which a century has given the sanction of a right. Besides, it is well known the Mahomedans never professed to govern the Hindoos by their own laws, but boldly assumed the language of haughty conquerors, and taught the conquered to believe that their lives were gratuitously spared; and that although they were graciously permitted to exercise some privileges, they were in fact entitled to no rights. The English have never pretended to hold their supremacy over India by any such tenure; on the contrary, they have not only fully recognized all the peculiarities of castes as inherent rights, but have especially promised to all classes the free exercise of their religion, and the full indulgence of their customs when not at variance with the rights of their fellow subjects; in proof of which we have maintained, at the public expense, vast establishments for the support of Hindoo temples, none of which would have been suffered to exist under the Mahomedan rule. This conclusion is apparent from the circumstance of the only relics of these religious edifices of importance (not built since the period of Marratta supremacy) being found south of the rivers Krishna

and Toongbudra, a tract over which the Mahomedans never held undisputed sway. The arguments of those persons therefore who, like yourself, quote the practice of the Mahomedans by way of precedent, are indefensible, because the cases are by no means parallel.

We have raised the expectations of all classes of our Indian subjects in the first instance by the most sacred pledges, and have confirmed them by their fulfilment. These measures alone have hitherto preserved our rule, and we must be cautious how we depart from them. Our empire has been denominated one of opinion, an opinion not ill founded of our national faith and integrity, and of our disposition to govern the people by their own laws. If engagements have sometimes been loosely kept between individuals, still a breach of national integrity has never been permitted. Fearful indeed will be the consequences when such an hour arrives, and woe be to that European government which shall attempt to rule India under such circumstances.

In point of justice, I shall confine myself to the mere fact of its being an article of religious faith with the Hindoos that the woman who shall burn on the same funeral pile with her husband absolves him from sin, and in a future state (as a reward for her fidelity and attachment) is indissolubly united to him. Faith is not a matter of choice, it

is the result of conviction; though this conviction is certainly frequently effected through the efforts of the mind to believe doctrines taught us by persons whom we respect. Any person who has witnessed the self-immolation of several Hindoo widows, conducting themselves as I have seen them, would find it difficult to divest himself of the idea that the very highest degree of faith had been attained by those infatuated females. The justice therefore of depriving them of their only religious consolation in the depth of grief (however mistaken their belief) seems at least doubtful. Moreover, I am of opinion that any general interference of the legislature to abolish the practice would be imminently hazardous to our Indian empire. I am not afraid that insurrections would break out on every spot where prevention was adopted, though much would depend in the way it was conducted. But the danger to be apprehended is much deeper seated. It seems to me likely that more numerous victims would come forward merely on account of the prohibition; the ceremonies would commence under due preparation for resisting the authority of government, and the military power would perhaps be called in to its support. Let us contemplate what would be the result in such a case. Public opinion would operate strongly against our departure from that principle which has hitherto restrained us from prohibiting the exercise of religious ceremonies; the

general feelings would probably influence our native soldiers, and they might refuse to perform a duty which deprived their countrymen of those privileges hitherto held sacred. Let it not be supposed that at such a period the employment of our European troops would either save the dignity or preserve the safety of the government. England never can afford to dispense with her native army; and as to the idea of the latter being kept under subjection by the former, no one who reflects for a moment, or who has had any experience, would suggest it. The high spirit which inspires our native soldiery in the field would support it against even imaginary oppression, and the fearful odds of 230,000 regular troops, aided by a population of 100,000,000 of inhabitants, against 25,000 Europeans, must render all hope of successful opposition futile.

Having made these observations on the practicability, the policy, and the justice of the measure of prohibition, I will just say a few words on the possibility of preventing the ceremony by persuasion. We have heard it vaunted that Mr. Duncan at Benares, and that Colonel Walker in Kattywar, succeeded in dissuading the Rajkoomar and Jarejah Raj-poots from putting their female infants to death. The measure was most laudable, and I conceive it to be the only rational mode of effecting its abolition. From what I can learn, however, it is very doubtful if the success has been equal to the

expectation formed, and I have heard it asserted even that female infanticide exists among the Rajkoomars of Juanpoor in as great a degree as ever.

It will readily be admitted that both these horrid rites are nearly equally repugnant to mankind, but we do not appreciate the Indian character, when we talk of abolishing religious customs at once by coercive legislative acts. Our only hope is the distant but sure prospect we have of effacing superstition and prejudice, by the slow and solemn march of intelligence. Instruction has commenced her work, and the effects are already perceptible at all the presidencies; the reverence paid to idols and sacred ceremonies is daily decreasing, and having lost all veneration for them, the abolition of unmeaning and cruel rites will assuredly follow, and gradually prepare the people to receive the doctrines of a creed which inculcates the purest morality, and is founded on a basis neither open to attack on account of its maxims, or liable to censure in its practice. This prospect, therefore, though remote, is open to us. It is however by no means impossible that the endeavours of some humane European magistrate or political agent, might be successful in dissuading the inhabitants of particular district, over which his local influence prevailed, to abandon the practice I have been discussing, and I will go so far as to admit it might be possible to persuade some Hindoo princes to enter into our

feelings, and to interest themselves so far as to prevent the self-immolation of widows within their territory. The example might spread, and the infatuation gradually cease. But success, though possible in this case, is by no means certain; its progress would be slow, and unless the abolition proceeded from the fullest conviction of the inutility of propitiating the deity by such a sacrifice, there would be danger of the measure being at some time or other revived.

The sentiments I have expressed on this occasion, will lead you to reflect on the dangerous pinnacle of power to which we have attained. There is danger in our very elevation, which induces us to forget by what means we have attained it, and to feel too secure in viewing the vast expanse of territory which seems to lie prostrate below us, and apparently so thoroughly under our control. Extensive and beautiful as is this prospect to those who look at it casually, yet it is full of inequalities, and requires the most vigilant eye, and the most skilful hand, to smooth them down into uniformity. Much of what appears cultivation is rank vegetation, and those which pass at a distance for simple summer streams may, by mismanagement, be swollen into torrents that may at one time inundate the whole surface.

At your age, and with your scanty portion of experience, you must be content to take much for

granted, but be assured that our Indian empire is one where either supineness or excess of rigor will be immediately felt; that, organized as the government is, it can only be conducted by men of the very highest qualifications; and that no office under the crown requires a larger portion of wisdom, vigilance, and magnanimity to fill it, than that of governor-general of India.

Yours, etc.

LETTER XIX.

Satâra.

MY DEAR GEORGE,

LIKE many other young men, you seem deterred by the mere appearance of difficulty from endeavouring to overcome it. I am not, however, surprised at your alarm in contemplating the records of an Indian village, which must at first seem to every one so complicated as if it were impossible to understand them. As you grow older you will find most of the difficulties of life lessen as you approach, and vanish in your endeavour to overcome them. If you have not done so already in this instance, you should read Colonel Wilks's first volume of the Sketches of Southern India, to comprehend more completely the nature of the village community which once prevailed everywhere throughout this country. If you are not then satisfied, you may take up the second volume of the Transactions of the Bombay Literary Society, wherein you will find a minute description of the township of Loney, near Poona, written by Dr. Thomas Coats. This gentleman, from his kind and conciliating manner, was enabled to mix so much with the people, particularly the agricultural classes, that he obtained a

degree of information regarding the village system which few other Europeans have acquired. From both these essays you will learn that each village in India is a sort of republic, that the land is considered to belong as a whole to the township, liable to the payment of a government tax. This tax, although undefined, is in ordinary times estimated to be equal to the value of a third of the gross produce; but the Indian lawgiver Ménû conceives that the sovereign has only a right to one fifth, and we find that in Egypt, in the time of Joseph, the people agreed to pay for ever the same portion to Pharaoh. The coincidence of the share payable to the sovereign, both in Egypt and India, at so very remote a period, is as remarkable as the similarity which exists in many points between the ancient astronomers of these two nations. You will perhaps comprehend me better if I endeavour to describe what the natives conceive to be the original mode in which a village is peopled, and in what way the land is occupied.

The Potail (Mokuddum, Gowr, or Reddy, as he is indifferently called in the several languages of India) is supposed, in the first instance, to apply to the sovereign for permission to occupy a spot of waste forest land, unattached to any township. Having obtained that permission, he proceeds to the place attended by his relations, carrying a basket on his head containing a few implements of domestic use

and of husbandry, besides offerings for the local deity. After the necessary sacrifice to the gods, measures are taken to construct huts, and to congregate the members of the village community. These consist at first of a village accountant (usually a Bramin), a carpenter, a smith, a barber, a currier, a watchman, a waterman (who distributes the running water of streams over the cultivated lands), besides other officers, who are requisite in some villages but not necessary in all. Each of these is a member of a distinct tribe, and can follow no other occupation than that to which he is destined by birth. These persons are retained in the village by annual stipends, payable either in kind (each cultivator contributing a portion of his crop) or by allotments of land.

Having established the village officers, the potail, or chief of this little society, usually agrees, in the name of the agriculturists, to clear the land and to till it on the following conditions.—First, That the land so cleared shall not be liable to any tax for a term, say the first three years. Secondly, That after the fourth year the tax payable to government shall be fixed at a maximum equal to one third, or one fifth of the gross produce, as the case may be, which shall be paid as follows :—viz. one seventh part of the tax on the fourth year, two sevenths on the fifth year, and so on, increasing one seventh part annually for seven successive years, till the

whole amount of the land-tax be completed. Thirdly, That the tax shall be levied on cultivated land only, and that fair remissions shall be made of a portion of the tax at the discretion of government in cases of entire failure of crops, arising out of the destruction occasioned by the elements, termed Asmâny, or by the devastation of armies, termed Sooltâny.

The management of the details, whether of fields, or realising the taxes from each cultivator, belongs wholly to the potail, or head man, and he is too much controlled by public opinion to be guilty of any act of very glaring injustice without risk of exposure and liability to punishment. The mere collection of the revenue by the potail does not cost the government one farthing, as the hereditary land he holds and the perquisites of his office are intended to remunerate him for his trouble and responsibility, and to maintain him in sufficient respectability to enable him to perform this and other official duties with effect.

The village being established, and the whole of the land occupied by tenants, its aggregate revenue is termed kumâl*, or maximum, the amount of which declines in proportion as the land is allowed to lie fal-

* It is right to observe, that the Indian terms throughout these Letters are those usually made use of in the Deccan, and that they are not confined to the languages of the Hindoos.

low, either from casual bad seasons, from great mortality occasioned by pestilence or famine, from mismanagement of the government, or from war. Such, more or less, is the fluctuating state of cultivation in every village in India; and it therefore becomes the duty and the interest of the potail to avail himself of circumstances to obtain cultivators to occupy the abandoned tracts, and to give it to them on terms such as they will accept, but always with a view of obtaining the best possible conditions in order to support the burthen of the government tax, and to add to his own perquisites of a share of the produce. These conditions ought to be and usually are reduced to writing, for the satisfaction of both parties; and the description of the field with its area, its name, and its boundary limits, are generally included in this document. The maximum being once ascertained the village accounts are no longer complicated, though it is by no means a short task to wade through all the minute details. The abstract, however, assumes the following shape:

Land lying fallow and abandoned, say . . .	20 parts.
Land held rent free under various tenures . .	15
Lands let on increasing leases	5
Lands paying full rent or tax to government . .	60
	100

The annual assessment on each field, however, is

by no means so simple an arrangement, and it is that which some of our European collectors conceive is better done by them and the government officers, than by the potail, in conjunction with the cultivators themselves. The total amount of acres capable of cultivation, and the sum they are liable to pay, are, it is true, already known, but it would be absurd to suppose that all the land of a village, comprising, perhaps, five thousand or six thousand acres, is equally good or productive. It would therefore be palpable injustice to assess the lands according to their extent, and equally so in proportion to their quality, on account of circumstances of which in Europe we may not at first see the importance. Not only the quality, but the depth of the soil is to be considered, the distance the men and cattle have to go, the proximity to manure, marle, water, and other advantages or disadvantages which none but those on the spot can know, all of which affect the value of the land. The capital also, and the farming stock of the individual, tend to render one field more valuable than another; as the capability of a tenant to improve his farm fluctuates from time to time, so the means of any individual paying a certain land rent will also be variable.

The native governments from long experience have found that no information obtained by public officers sent to investigate on the spot, has ever qualified them to make permanent assessments on

fields. A maximum assessment of whole villages has long been obtained, and under the best administrations it is adhered to, subject to such incidental variations as have been before noticed. The share payable by each cultivator is liable to excess or diminution, according to circumstances known only to the inhabitants themselves. The government, however, seldom experiences much difference in realizing the revenue so long as the people are left to the management of their own concerns, and, as I before observed, public opinion keeps the system alive and in health. Besides the government tax is an additional one, not unlike our parish rates, though applicable to different purposes. The nature of which may be easily conceived from the following examples:—

To feeding Bramins on particular festivals.

To lighting the village temples and gates.

To expenses incurred on certain anniversaries.

To feeding travellers and strangers; one meal to each.

To repairing a part of the village wall.

To repairing the chief temple.

To constructing a new gate for the village.

Paid to certain men for killing the tiger which long infested the neighbourhood, &c.

Much discretion is necessarily left to the potail in incurring these expenses, many of which are fixed and admitted by the government annually,

while others are casual and temporary. It is usually supposed that great abuses exist in the exercise of the latitude allowed to the potail under the native governments, but where the superior local officers are open to complaints, and the head man liable to punishment, the individual injury sustained is trifling, in a general point of view, compared with the benefit which accrues to the people and to the government, by confiding the management of the village concerns to its own community.

The importance of upholding this system is not at once apparent till trial is made of some other, and the experience we have already had in legislating for the Indians does not encourage us to hope for much improvement by abolishing their institutions.

Before closing this subject, I would wish to impress on your mind the value which the village officers attach to their hereditary offices. The potail and his accountant, together with the priest and schoolmaster, are the only classes likely to attain any distinction in society; but such is the importance they attach to these heir-looms, that Mahajee Sindia, a sovereign prince at the head of an army of 60,000 men, and holding a territory equal in extent to some of those of the crowned heads in Europe, prided himself through life on the humble, though honourable appellation of POTAIL BABA, by which he chose to be designated. Another in-

stance occurred when Holkar was compelled, in 1818, to cede all his territory in the Deccan. In framing the treaty of Mundsoor, he clung fondly to the few hereditary offices he held in that tract, although not altogether valued at £2000 a year, and entreated he might be allowed to retain the privileges, and be permitted to exercise the functions of these offices. So that a sovereign prince is now seen represented by deputy, and making his annual offering of a rupee (two shillings) to the English collector, on the occasion of obtaining his receipt for the money collected in the village of which he is the hereditary magistrate. A village officer cannot be deprived of his office but for treason, nor indeed is it common on such occasions to take it from the family, but to transfer it to the nearest branch not attainted. I know an instance of a potail who went into service, and by his earnings paid the quit-rent of fields he could not cultivate, in order to preserve them in his family. Ten years ago, after an absence of twenty years from his patrimony, he was enabled to re-establish himself, and claimed his office. He is now potail of the village, and has become a respectable farmer, the sole proprietor of two or three hundred acres. Such instances are not singular.

Having explained the value of hereditary offices in villages, it is proper I should say something of landed tenures. In every village are two descrip-

tions of cultivators. The one is composed of those persons who reside in it, and who have for ages held the same lands, liable of course to the usual rates. The other class is composed of those who, living in one village, cultivate the lands of another township. The former are not liable to be ousted, so long as they pay the government tax. The latter obtain their lands on more easy terms, but are required to renew their leases annually, and may consequently be ejected, after they have reaped the crop they have sown. A resident cultivator acquires a prescriptive right of cultivating a certain field by living in the village, during the period of fulfilling the compact he engages for with the potail, to bring waste into cultivation, provided it be not the private property of some absent individual, who can always claim it on paying for all the improvements made by the new settler; an occurrence, however, which seldom takes place.

Under Hindoo governments a tenant can dispose of his right in the land either by gift, by sale, or by transfer, and at his death the privilege devolves on his heirs. The sophistry, therefore, which maintains that the land in India appertains exclusively to the sovereign, while it admits the fact of the usufruct being vested solely in the cultivator so long as he continues to pay the government tax or rent, is about as sound as if a man were to say a man's horse belongs to the crown, because it may be seized

or sold to pay the tax to which the possessor is liable for keeping it.

Those persons who quote the Mahomedan law or practice to prove this assertion, in truth, prove nothing; for the Mahomedans did not recognize the Hindoos as within the pale of their laws. They were held to be slaves whose lives and property were spared, as an act of grace, originating in political motives; for the Mahomedan lawyers do not acknowledge the Hindoos to have any rights whatsoever, but such as political expediency, from time to time, grants to them.

Besides the land cultivated by these two descriptions of tenants, a considerable portion of each village is alienated by the government to be held either rent free, or on the payment of a small quit-rent or fine annually. The Desmook (or Zemindar, as he is termed in Bengal,) head of the district, is an hereditary officer, who formerly superintended the collection of the revenue derived from a Perguna, or district, and who was remunerated for his trouble and expenses in various ways, and he and his deputy (Despandy, or hereditary register) obtained usually about ten per cent. on the revenue realized as a remuneration.

In some instances these officers held a few acres of land in each village on quit-rent tenure, besides receiving a per centage on the revenue. In others they had a per centage, and a few acres in the neigh-

bourhood of the principal town only. The duties of these officers under our government are dispensed with, but in the Deccan they retain their hereditary perquisites, of which nothing but an act of violence could have deprived them. Independently of lands held rent free by the Desmooks and Despandies, there is a considerable portion of each village allotted on similar tenures to the potail, and to each of the village officers, and to priests, for supporting the temple and its servants. When there are waste lands in a village to which no one lays claim, it is usual for the government to reward some meritorious individual, by giving him an estate in perpetuity, to himself and heirs, in his native village or town, rent free. All lands of this and every other description, cultivated in India under the Hindoo government, appear to be *bonâ fide* private property, and those persons who argue to the contrary seem either to make a distinction without a difference, or they quote Mahomedan law and practice, the former inapplicable to the Hindoos, and the latter founded on the grossest injustice and contempt.

Yours, etc.

LETTER XX.

Satâra.

MY DEAR GEORGE,

The village system of administration, as I have described it, appears, from the remains which are everywhere to be traced of its existence, to have been once general throughout India. It was however for a long time neither understood nor appreciated by the bigoted Mahomedans, who, in the course of six centuries, contrived to conquer the greater part of a country exceeding in superficies the continent of Europe. These conquerors though they at first acknowledged no civil rights in their Hindoo subjects, yet in time gradually became reconciled to them as they themselves became naturalized, and in the reign of Acbur, the third prince of the Mogul dynasty, the Hindoos appear to have enjoyed much consideration and valuable privileges. The more the Mahomedans were acquainted with these people and their institutions, the more closely do they appear to have adopted them in their legislation, introducing but few innovations in the fiscal and revenue departments. We have in most cases succeeded to the empire of the Mahomedans. This race came from a proximate territory, the institutions of

which in some respects resembled those of the Hindoos, and whose state of civilization was probably not far above theirs. We came from a distance of half the globe, with hardly any customs in common with them, and were necessarily utter strangers to their whole system.

With the best intentions, while yet uninformed of their habits, unacquainted with their religion and prejudices, and ignorant of their civil rights, we began to legislate for them at an early period; but instead of confirming to them their institutions we introduced new ones at variance sometimes with each other, and totally dissimilar from theirs. That highly respected and benevolent nobleman, Lord Cornwallis, nearly forty years since, farmed almost the whole of our Bengal provinces in perpetuity to the Zemindars, the hereditary revenue collectors of the Hindoo government, who, instead of being any longer public servants, were constituted landholders. Much has been written for and against his plan, but if, as it is asserted, the rights of the minor landholders were subverted, the whole machine of the village system destroyed, and the local police abolished to make room for one both expensive and inefficient, we have, in our attempt to benefit the people, committed injustice towards them, and deprived them of those privileges and that protection which it was our wish to have secured to them.

In our desire to afford justice too, courts of

law were established, and the simple Indian courts* superseded. In our courts the Mahomedan law was promulgated as the standard by which we were to legislate for millions of Hindoos, and the proceedings conducted in Persian, a language equally foreign to the judges, the pleaders, and the parties themselves. The difficulties arising out of this system soon became apparent, to remedy which, regulations upon regulations were framed, till the volume may now vie with our English statutes. In spite of all that has been written on the subject, much of the evil still prevails, and justice proceeds with tardy steps, while many hundreds of causes lie over on the file.

The advantages promised by the permanent settlement were so fair, that the same plan was subsequently proposed to be adopted at Madras; but the existence of village communities had before that period become known, and the interest which the governor, Lord W. Bentinck, took in the question prevented its adoption—a measure which preserved the village system entire, and ensured among other advantages the benefits of the established police. Although the Madras government interfered to prevent the introduction of the Zemindaree permanent settlement, it did not discourage another equally novel. The village institutions were recognized, but there appeared in many instances an inconvenience arising out of the power of the potail to impose additional

* Vide Letter on Punchayuts.

taxes on individuals beyond those paid by the government. It seemed desirable, instead of allowing him, in concert with the village community, to assess individuals annually according to circumstances, to ascertain the exact quantity of land held by each tenant, to fix an assessment on it to be rendered permanent, and to secure to the cultivator for ever his land, on the payment of that particular sum. This plan was proposed by an eminent statesman who subsequently held the reins of the Madras government, and it would not be easy to devise a plan apparently more equitable, and better calculated to protect the cultivator and to promote the public interests. But how has it answered in practice? We are told the revenue has fallen off; that many hundreds of cultivators, finding their assessments too heavy, have in some years absconded; that the potail, deprived of all authority, is indifferent to the occupation of waste land in which he has no longer any interest; and that he has ceased to be the active magistrate of the village, or the head of a well-regulated police. Both systems have, besides, this palpable objection, that as the land is the only source of our Indian revenue, it is impolitic to limit our demand, as it is impossible to say how the public expenses may be increased. The Indian revenue as it is seems barely sufficient to maintain our peace-establishment; and the moment war is declared, and war we must always be prepared to expect, loans are opened

and a new debt is incurred, while an accession of territory for a time replenishes the coffers, till the regular expensive system of an English administration places the revenue in its former relative position.

Both systems, equally remote from that of the Hindoo village constitution, tended to degrade the village magistracy, to impair that venerable fabric, and to render inefficient the village police. On the whole therefore, though both were intended to benefit the people, neither seems to have had the effect in a degree equal to what would have been derived by merely superintending their own system. This was calculated to satisfy the inhabitants, to preserve the integrity of the village community, and to govern the people by a code of laws to which it was familiar, and which upon the whole is suited to them better perhaps than any innovations we can introduce.

You will perceive by this letter therefore that I am an enemy to innovations such as these; and I candidly confess to you my opinion, that having solemnly promised to govern this people by their own laws and institutions, we have no right to introduce new ones, excepting in conformity with their own wishes; and I think that such is the state of our ignorance of the native scheme throughout, that we are not even yet fit to venture on introducing plans of our own. Let us, in the

first instance, collect information, and when all agree that we have a tolerable idea of the model of a Hindoo government, we may then, and not till then, attempt to alter it.

I will not enter into detail on the mode of collecting the inland transit duties. The native governments farm them out regularly to the highest bidder, and we have adopted the same plan without venturing on any alteration till we see our way more clearly in this complicated and delicate branch of revenue.

Monopolies of salt, opium, tobacco, drugs, and spices, and spirituous liquors, sold annually, also form another source of profit to the government, besides which are the small taxes imposed on mechanics and manufacturers, a species of impost defined by no specific rules.

Yours, etc.

LETTER XXI.

Satâra.

MY DEAR GEORGE,

I WAS much amused by the instance you have given me of the ingenuity of the thief-taker. It is one, however, of many I have heard of a similar nature, and comes in confirmation of the old and true adage, "set a thief to catch a thief." The man you speak of is the celebrated Ramjee Naig, so famed as a robber in the time of the late government. About ten years ago, when only a lad of eighteen, he headed a band of twenty men to rescue his father and brother, who were taken in an affray out of which he escaped. Having heard they were confined in a hill fort, he obtained access to the place as a vendor of grass, and making his observations, he let down ropes one night for his associates. After killing the sentries over the prison, he released his two relatives, and the whole effected their escape. The father died a natural death two years after, and the brother fell by the hand of a traveller whom he attacked in a narrow pass, while Ramjee continued long after the leader of a gang. After the subversion of the late government, and the establishment

of ours, he came in, and made terms for himself, by which he became a pensioner, and was at the same time restored to the office of head of the police of his native village, from which he had been absent since he was a boy; and he is now one of the most active and intelligent thief-takers in the country. The idea of tracking persons by their footsteps seems to have originated with these people in their mode of tracking wild beasts when they hunt them. In hot climates the tigers, and almost all shy animals, are fond of sheltering themselves under the luxuriant foliage of those vines which abound on the margins of mountain streams. The torrents of these, when they come down, occupy a space of two or three hundred feet, but running off rapidly, only leave a small current in the middle of a sandy bed. The wild animals, therefore, cannot quit their lairs either for water or for prey, without leaving the impressions of their paws; and I have known them traced from one spot to another for several hours, till they were at length killed.

The village watchmen usually follow this occupation, but their public occupations are of a more important nature, which I shall proceed to describe. The watchman, you may recollect I formerly mentioned, is one of the village hereditary officers; he is paid partly in kind and partly by a portion of land allotted to him, which he usually rents to some cultivator. His duties are various, both to the govern-

ment and to the village; and it sometimes happens that when the interest of both are at variance, the watchman adheres more faithfully to the latter than to the former. His principal duty to the state is to apprehend thieves within the limits of his township, and to point out, in cases of dispute, the boundary of the village. That to the village community consists in watching and shutting the gates, in going the rounds of the outskirts, and in guarding the threshing floors outside the town at night. He is also bound to run of errands for the potail, to attend all travellers, to rub down their horses, and to guide and protect them to the next village on his journey. In the performance of these latter offices he has all the advantage of gaining every information regarding every stranger; and if the latter either commits any crime, or is himself attacked within the village limits, the watchman being at hand is able to afford the requisite intelligence. As the flesh of all cattle, either killed by wild beasts, or which die within the village limits, is the perquisite of the watchman, he has a particular interest in knowing their exact extent, and this probably is the reason why he is appealed to in all cases of disputed boundaries. In deciding such disputes a buffalo is sacrificed, and the watchman being clad in the warm raw hide, perambulates the limits. Such is the dread of some horrid calamity befalling his family if he be false, that I believe no instance is on record of a watchman for-

feiting his reputation for fidelity on such an occasion. Besides these duties, he is the messenger who conveys the government revenue to the public treasury, and although among the very poorest class of the community, I never heard of an instance of his betraying of his trust. In his capacity of thief-catcher, he is bound to carry the track either of men or cattle out of the village limits if clearly pointed out to him, or to deliver them up; in failure of which, under the native government, the whole village is compelled to contribute and make up the loss, as was once customary even in England.

Two remarkable instances of the vigilance of the Indian police have come under my own observation. The one was that of a horse stolen, which was traced for five days, and was recovered at the distance of 150 miles from the place whence he was taken. The other was in following the tracks of nine men and a dog, which were pursued from village to village for more than fifty miles across the country, and five of the robbers were taken at different places after they had separated. On such occasions the watchmen measure the footsteps minutely and frequently, to identify them when there happen to be several, and they will in this manner track a man through a crowd, and follow him from one street to another till he quits the village, and then continue the pursuit till they come up with him. There is a remarkable but well authenticated fact of a thief-

taker, who, having in vain followed the tracks of a man who had stolen a horse from the lines of a regiment of European dragoons, accidentally recognized the same footsteps six months after in the middle of a fair at some town several miles off. The foot was particularly hollow and left a very remarkable impression, by which it was known, and after several hours' tracking, the police-man traced the thief out of the fair and apprehended him on his road to a neighbouring village, when he confessed the robbery of the horse, and led to its recovery.

Beside the village police in cities, each mohulla, or parish, has an hereditary superintendant of the market and police, who has a certain number of constables under him. The circumstance of their being hereditary seems to have shocked all our notions of efficiency, so that instead of endeavouring to excite these officers to their duty by fines in cases of neglect, as was customary under the native governments, we substitute officers of our own nomination usually without local information, for fear they should have too much influence and use it to bad purposes. At the same time we have in some instances respected the hereditary perquisites of the ancient officers, and allowed them to enjoy the fees without aiding the state with their services. In many places under our government the old police therefore has been lost, and a new, expensive, and frequently an inefficient one is substituted. Now, though the motives for

this innovation cannot be impeached, and the substitution of a police paid direct from the treasury and under the immediate control of government, appears the most rational system; yet it frequently happens by attempting to improve the mechanism we do not thoroughly comprehend, we render inefficient a machine whose only fault was, that it wanted to be a little more excited.

Yours, etc.

LETTER XXII.

Satâra.

MY DEAR GEORGE,

I AM not surprised at your complaining of the difficulties which occur at every stage of the proceedings of the *punchayut* or trial by jury, as it is by no means a singular complaint.

Most of those persons, like Mr. A., who have been directed to make use of the *punchayut*, complain of its inefficiency, while some few of its advocates who speak well of the system in practice, cannot satisfactorily explain how the obstacles to which you allude are to be removed.

I shall not pretend to offer you much entertainment in the discussion of so dry a question, nor shall I perhaps be able to meet all the objections which you have stated; but having considered the subject of punchayuts with a good deal of reflection, and having questioned many well informed natives on the subject, I have come to the conclusion that under the native governments the system works well, and that ninety-nine out of a hundred civil suits are decided by this ordeal. If it be asserted in reply that justice is never fairly or impartially administered under any Hindoo government, I can

only observe then, that a very large proportion of the Indian population, in the absence of all justice, still enjoys as much, if not more happiness, and exhibits as much prosperity as appears in the contiguous districts of the British government: though I can boldly assert, without fear of contradiction, that no body of public functionaries, from the boards in England down to the collectors and judges in India, ever strove more diligently in any age or under any government of which we read, to legislate mildly and justly for the subjects over whom they rule. Their very anxiety to attain this end may sometimes defeat their purpose; they seem desirous to do justice between man and man without delay, without expense, and without inconvenience to any member of the community. Now, it is well known to all legislators that justice can be had in no society without some expense, and without involving a vast deal of trouble to many individuals; and moreover, that the persons administering it must be armed with very full powers. Our propensity to suspect the natives, and to be jealous of granting them any authority, have rendered it impracticable hitherto to allow the punchayut, or trial by jury, a fair scope for action; since it is a maxim even of our best governors to encourage and receive complaints, and never to punish, though the plaintiff proves a mere calumniator. How is it possible then that the proceedings of a punchayut should ever

hold good or be approved by the party who is cast, if the members are liable to be called before a European magistrate or judge to defend their verdict. Under the native governments, for reasons which I shall hereafter shew, the system is found to be complete and efficient.

I have heard it stated and maintained by some of our countrymen, that the punchayut never was any thing more nor less than a simple court of arbitration; that when two litigants had a dispute regarding property, they mutually agreed to submit the case to the decision of a certain number of persons to be brought by each, and the court after investigating the subject gave their decision, by which the parties abided. But we know that such a mode of dispensing justice would fail in the very outset, whereas it is notorious that the punchayut under the native administration answers all the purposes of the most expensive courts of law.

It is proper, however, that I should observe that there were two modes of adjusting disputes. Where the case was such that the magistrate could not conveniently settle it off hand, he recommended the parties to bring together their neighbours, and submit the cause to arbitration. If they agreed to do so, certain forms and penalties were imposed at every stage of the proceeding on each party, which I shall hereafter explain, and which rendered this

court as efficient and binding in every point of view as if the members were appointed by government. If however the parties delayed beyond a certain time, and one of them required a punchayut of indifferent persons unconnected with either to be assembled, the magistrate at the head of the court in which application was made) collected a number of such persons as he thought competent, who, forming a jury or commission, proceeded to try and decide the cause.

Previously to entering into the details of the punchayut proceedings, it will be interesting for you to know what were the courts under the Hindoo government, and you will be surprised to find that they differ but little from the primitive courts of our own country.

In the first instance was the petty court, in which presided the Setty (or Cotwal of the Mahomedans), a magistrate who superintended the market and the police. Into his court all disputes occurring during the market or fair were brought and decided on the spot, which seems to answer to our court of Pié-poudre.

The potail or magistrate of every village held a sort of court of an evening, under the large tree usually planted before every village gate, for the purpose of settling disputes among the village community. This court could not take cognizance of

any affair in which a person of another village was concerned. In such a case recourse was had to the Desmook, or head of a division of many villages.

In these courts causes were either decided by the head of the court in a summary manner after taking vivâ voce evidence, or by punchayut; but whether the members were selected by the parties themselves or by nomination of the magistrate it was immaterial.

From these decisions appeals lay to the Durbar, or the court in which the sovereign presides, either in person or by deputy, as was the case in our grand justiciary court at Westminster Hall.

I shall now proceed to state what were the forms required to render the punchayut efficient. This mode of trial appears to be the most simple and ancient. It may be considered, indeed, an institution coeval with every civil government. According to the Roman law the jury or selected judges (like the punchayut of the Hindoos) were appointed by the prætor, with the consent of both parties, which seems to have been as essential in all ancient governments as it is now among the Hindoos. In England and in Rome it was once necessary, as it is now in India, that a malefactor should confess his crime before he be executed. But to return to the punchayut. The plaintiff having put in his plea to the magistrate, is obliged to find security (PRUTTEE BHOO) to

pay a fine in case his complaint should prove unfounded, and to pay a fee (HURKEE) in case of recovering his property. Similar forms once existed in our own courts, but the securities are now nominal. The plaintiff having entered his plea, the defendant is required to satisfy him within a certain period, or to be prepared to defend himself against the demand. After the specified time has elapsed, the defendant is required either to give security or to deposit the amount of the claim for his appearance on the trial, in failure of which his person or property to the full amount is distrained. On the day appointed, if either party fail to appear he is nonsuited, and judgement should go by default. But such is the want of rigor in the practice of the modern Hindoo governments, that this rule is seldom enforced in the first instance.

The parties having appeared before the punchayut, are required first of all each to give a razeenâmâ (deed of assent) to abide by its judgement. All the depositions are taken in writing, and the questions and replies are written in the hand of those persons putting and answering them in case they are able to do so, if not, their mark is affixed to the end of their deposition. In the course of the proceedings the parties sometimes join issue as with us, by making the judgement depend on the proof of a certain point, this is called POORONY,

and it is given in writing by the party so pledging himself, in failure of which proof he loses the cause. The proceedings being closed, each party is required to give a final instrument in writing denominated WURTUNOOK, being an agreement to fulfil the award to the fullest extent, and for which he is required to find security. By these measures the punchayut secures the means of executing the decree as soon as the award is given. This being over, the government interferes if called on to compel the parties to remunerate the punchayut, or the witnesses; but as the members are usually persons of the same avocation with the litigants, and are liable to come into court themselves on similar occasions, they seldom make any demand. This is usually confined to indigent witnesses, who may happen to have come from a distance.

Under the native governments, appeals can only be heard when the appellant enters into HURKEE and GONAGAREE bonds or securities for fee or fine to a large amount, in case of the reversion or confirmation of the decree; a measure, which though apparently severe, deters persons from making frivolous appeals, though it does not altogether preclude them from doing.

The forms above alluded to exist under all Hindoo governments, but it cannot be denied that in some they have been made the instruments of

extortion and corruption, a reflection not so much on the system, as on the mode of its execution.

For five years I conducted the system of punchayuts without knowing the forms: though much business was done, yet new obstacles arose daily.

Since that period I have been four years in a situation to observe their practice under a native government, and I can with truth assert, that it is a most simple, cheap, and efficient mode of administering justice, and is admirably calculated for a people situated as is the present state of Indian society. That it is equal in the nice distribution of justice required by our refined notions, I do not pretend to say, though it seems, in every respect, well adapted to give universal satisfaction to the community wherein it prevails.

These few hints are only thrown out with a view to induce you to inquire into the true state of punchayuts. The limits of a letter do not admit of any very full discussion on such a subject as common law, but after what I have stated, you may add to your stock of information greatly by investigation, and at all events I trust you will, as I have at length, become reconciled to the trial by jury in India in civil cases.

Yours, etc.

LETTER XXIII.

Satâra.

MY DEAR GEORGE,

"It is now a year since my last letter to you on the subject of the natives, and I should have thought it unnecessary to revert to it had it not been for our late personal interview, and the observations I have made on your manners towards the Indians, and your opinions regarding them, during the time you have been living with me. As Lord Chesterfield said to his son, "You have too many good qualities not to be able to afford being thought deficient in some excellency." The deficiency to which I particularly allude is the absence of courtesy and consideration in your conduct towards persons of the upper classes.

In your intercourse with the public functionaries of a collector's office, you had principally to deal with clerks, many of them, no doubt, men of much respectability, and with the agriculturalists who contribute to the revenue. The manners which may suit these people, all of whom were your inferiors and the subjects of our government, are not adapted to strangers and the ministers and nobles of a foreign and independent court. Having now been

appointed assistant to the Resident at N—— you are to become a member of his family, and your conduct must necessarily be identified with his, as the representative of the British nation; and on that account your behaviour should be more circumspect, not only in public, but even in your private concerns with the people.

Having fairly entered the political line, it behoves you to study the history of India, particularly that of the court at which you reside, as well as all its connexions with foreign states. Much of the latter information you will probably obtain in the Resident's office; and you cannot employ your time more profitably than by devoting half of that which you formerly applied to Hindoostany to the pursuit. You should now also return to the study of Persian, which you seem to have neglected since you left Hertford. It will require some time to recover what has been lost in three years. By all means, therefore, procure an instructor, a native of Persia, or else, though you may learn to translate and make yourself useful in rendering into English the public documents that come to the Resident from the court, you can never hope to speak the language and qualify yourself at some future period for conducting negociations at the neighbouring courts of Cabul, Sind, or Persia. A great number of Persian books, in which are contained all the histories, memoirs, and correspondence of the Indian

Mahomedan empire, was compiled in this country. But Persian here is usually studied as a dead language; and though the Indian Mahomedans are not deficient in erudition, they are as incapable of speaking Persian with facility as a professor at Oxford or Cambridge would be of talking Greek with a native of Athens.

I have, however, departed from the main object which I had in addressing this letter to you. As a politician it is not only necessary you should study the history of the country and court; but as a diplomatist you must study not books, but men. The principal duties of the latter are to persuade those with whom he is to communicate to enter into his views. This is to be effected not merely by argument, but by the force of influence obtained by address, by a systematic endeavour to please and conciliate, and to render the person whom you are desirous to convince pleased with himself; to make him believe that the object you wish for will be equally advantageous to him (or his master, if he be a subordinate) as to you. With your notions of the Indians, however, and your manners towards them, I fear it will be very long before you become accomplished in this respect. It is not sufficient that you are not rude, but to ministers and men of rank you must learn to be polite and attentive. You must endeavour also to make favourable impressions on their men of business,

especially on those who possess any influence or confidence. In all these attempts, you will, however, decidedly fail, if your conduct is marked by any symptoms of contempt, either for them, their habits, or their opinions. You must accustom yourself to make greater allowances than you now do for the state of Indian society; and learn rather to be reconciled to what you meet with, and to look out for objects of interest, than perpetually to draw comparisons from European society unfavourable to them. The Indians, you are aware, were once a people famed for their wisdom and knowledge. They have suffered the decline incident to a conquered nation, but still retain much both of their science and of their civil institutions, and in a degree more remarkable than any other race in the universe. I do not profess to maintain that they are a people who can bear comparison in these respects with the English of the present day; but we should have no cause of exultation if we were to consider what they were a thousand years ago, though it seems likely that the æra of their greatest civilization would carry us back two or three thousand.

I thought in my former letters I had said all that was necessary on the subject of intercourse with the natives; but you told me when you were here, that I had not touched sufficiently on the subject of visiting, and as you are likely to have your good breeding

put frequently to the test on this point, I shall do so now.

The Indians are perhaps the most ceremonious of all nations, and the rules of decorum are seldom infringed but when insult is intended. You are already aware that etiquette requires every person in the room, as well as the master, to rise as often as a guest takes his seat, a ceremony which is repeated when a person, having left the room, returns to it. An omission of this observance would be to assume a superiority very offensive to any but dependents. Equals and even superiors are as punctilious in returning visits as in Europe, which should first come from inferiors, and for this reason no invitation to another person's house would be accepted till the first visit had been returned. On these occasions invitations are not so respectful when written, as when communicated by a confidential member of the family, and to come in person and invite a guest to your house, is the most polite and honourable distinction. In receiving a visitor, the master of the house regulates his motions according to the rank of his guest. An equal is received by the host standing up and advancing his hand to meet and embrace him, if he has been long absent. The latter ceremony, however, takes place only on such an occasion, or on a first introduction. After the master of the house has greeted his guest, he points to a seat, and the whole company just rise

an inch or two from their seats and sit down with him. It is the height of rudeness to be seated when a superior or even equal is standing, and no man of respectability is ever guilty of such a breach of decorum, nor will he be seated in the presence of his superior on any account whatever. Should the visitor be a person of rank considerably higher than the master of the house, the latter rises and advances half the length of the saloon to meet him, or even as far as the threshold of the door. If the visitor be a prince of the blood or of very superior rank, it is usual to advance outside of the door to the street, or even as far as his conveyance. The parties being seated, the host usually remarks that his guest has done him much honour by coming to his house, while the latter returns these compliments by suitable observations. In Europe it is usual to wait till the visitor rises before the ceremony ends; in the East the master of the house determines the length of the visit by ordering spices, perfumes, and pân (the leaf eaten by the Indians after their meals) to be brought, which he presents with his own hand, the leaf always being presented last by the host to the principal guest. When perfumes and pân are not at hand, (which is sometimes the case in camp and at the houses of Europeans,) the visit is brought to a close by the master of the house observing, he hopes to see his guests soon again some other time, and by apologizing for not having

the usual spices, &c. This is at all times deemed unceremonious, and should only be practised either when the intimacy of the parties warrants such a departure from established custom, or on occasions where necessity requires it to be dispensed with.

It is quite contrary to etiquette to converse on business on a first visit, and when they are merely those of ceremony certain subjects should be scrupulously avoided. No allusions to the females of the family, to matters of caste and peculiar habits, should by any means be introduced. Remarks on dress or on the good looks of any relative present or absent are rude, and to praise any jewels, horses, elephants, or equipage in the presence of the owner, renders it incumbent on him, as a point of good breeding, instantly to present it, at the same time it is always understood that an equivalent in some other equally valuable or more precious article will be given in return. The Indians have a great dread of an envious eye, which they think liable to bring calamity on the object: so that if a child or a horse be especially admired, it is apprehended some harm will happen to it. To avoid which, a piece of gold or some other precious ornament should be given at the time, to hang round the neck of the object, to avert the envious glance to the necklace. It is usual for the master of the house to address his conversation to the chief guest, particularly if a person of rank come attended

by others: it being quite contrary to etiquette to allow his attention to be withdrawn from him. In this respect the custom of India differs from that of Europe, where the height of good breeding seems to require equal attention to all one's visitors, unless indeed a party is especially given to a particular individual. It would require a library to contain a code of rules for good breeding, and a lifetime to peruse it; much more must necessarily be acquired by observation than by instruction. To observation therefore I now leave you, and if this does not render you accomplished, it were vain to expect you can ever become a diplomatist.

As this is probably the last letter I shall ever address you on the subject on which we have so long corresponded, I cannot too strongly impress on your mind the necessity of your viewing the native character with much indulgence. You are too fond of drawing unfavourable comparisons from insulated examples, selected from modern European history; but this is by no means just. There was once a time when the picture might have been reversed in favour of them. The manners of the civilized Hindoo would no more have suited the barbarous Goth or Briton, than those of the civilized European would suit the Hindoo of the present age. Nature has made the inhabitants of these remote regions as different as the climates in which they are born; and it is as absurd to suppose the race

inhabiting the hot climates, incapable of much excellence, as to suppose that the climate itself is incapable of producing any of the fruits of the earth, because it cannot produce ice and snow.

I am willing to allow even that in the growth of civilization the Indian has only attained half the perfection in the arts to which the European has arrived. Circumstances have conspired to prevent the expansion of his mind, and the fetters of superstition might, but for casual events, have kept us in the state of barbarism we were in during the reign of Henry VIII. While the habits of the Indians are restrained by customs dearer to them than life, and which we cannot abolish even if we wished it, how can we expect that our institutions are fitted for them? As well might we measure a dwarf by the standard of a giant, or expect that the garments of the one should suit the body of the other. In our over-anxiety to improve their condition, we are apt to introduce plans of government of our own, without comprehending those which we are superseding, into which the more narrowly we look the more we shall see to admire. We shall no doubt find much to reform, which might be done gradually and patiently, but little, very little to remove altogether. It seems our duty, therefore, rather to conform to their systems, than to compel whole nations to adopt laws and usages ill suited to their happi-

ness, merely because they are deemed essential to ours.

The more intimately we can blend our administration with the political institutions of the Indian communities, the more likely are we to retain our dominion in that empire of opinion, on which alone our strength rests. Whereas, the more we desire to innovate and intrude maxims at variance with those institutions, the farther are we removing ourselves from the hearts of our Indian subjects, and the more likely are we to bring on that reaction which will sooner or later dissolve the tie that now connects India with England; a tie which, if once rent asunder with violence, may produce a mutual repugnance, which will probably never again be united.

Our Indian empire indeed is the most wonderful anomaly which history presents to us; a population of a hundred millions of souls of various religions, languages, and habits, governed by a small body of foreigners, whose chief strength consists in their moral and intellectual powers, which enable them to retain the whole machine in order by the voluntary aid of the population itself. It were absurd to imagine that India is held in forcible subjection by the few Englishmen who reside there for a time, and then quit it never to return, and perhaps never to think on it or the fate of its inhabitants. No! India is united to England by the singular

system which pervades its administration in all its parts. I have little doubt that the very circumstance of the existence of castes in India, which we are apt to deplore, and which has prevented the Indians from rising to any higher degree of eminence than they have attained, will be, so long as it continues, the most formidable obstacle to their shaking off their dependence. To control this nation of castes, it seems absolutely requisite that a caste of rulers should also be formed such as exist in our civil and military establishments. The civil officers are the chief agents by which the people are governed, and it is on them the supreme power, whether in India or in England, must rely, for confirming in the minds of the inhabitants the opinion they now entertain of its just and benevolent intentions. A conviction of this fact will, I am sure, stimulate you to render yourself a worthy representative of the British name.

Above all things, however, avoid looking on the people by whom you are surrounded with contempt. No one who ever came to India has had more opportunities of knowing the Asiatics, and has profited more by that acquaintance than Sir John Malcolm. He attached such importance to the intercourse which his assistants were likely to have with them, that, on his quitting Malwa, some years ago, he left a few Instructions for their guidance, as a sort of legacy. On the subject of our real or fancied su-

periority over the natives, he remarks, "I recollect the time (and I do it with shame) when I thought I was very superior to those with whom my duty made me associate; but as my knowledge of them and of myself improved, the distance between us gradually lessened. I have seen and heard much of our boasted advantages over them, but I cannot think if all the ranks of the different communities of Europe and India are comparatively viewed, that there is just ground for any very arrogant feeling on the part of the inhabitants of the former; nor can I join in that common place opinion which condemns in a sweeping way the natives of this country, as men (taking the best of them) not only unworthy of trust and devoid of principle, but of too limited intelligence and reach of thought to allow of Europeans with large and liberal minds and education having rational or satisfactory intercourse with them."

So highly did the governments in India think of these Instructions, that they printed and circulated them for the use of the civil servants, and in case you may not have seen them I send you a copy. There may be some parts of these Instructions which you may, perhaps, conceive exhibit too flattering a picture of the natives, but you must recollect they are addressed to a corps of politicians, whose intercourse is necessarily confined to the upper classes. They are written by one who has negociated and

formed many distinct treaties with independent princes in different parts of Asia, whether in India, Arabia, or Persia, and who has dwelt for more than forty years among the people, though at the same time he has had frequent opportunities of visiting Europe, and has had occasion and opportunity to compare Asiatics with the most profound statesmen, the most renowned soldiers, and the most accomplished nobles and princes in Europe. He is a person possessing in an eminent degree the qualities of a diplomatist, and remarkable for his great discrimination and observation of the human mind. If he be in error, therefore, in his judgment of the native character after such opportunities and with such qualifications, from whom are we to look for a correct picture?

I have, in this concluding letter, entered more fully into our political relations with India than I intended, but I do not consider the opinions thrown away when I reflect I am perhaps addressing some future statesman, who may emulate the abilities and virtues of Clive, Hastings, Teignmouth, Elphinstone, Munro, or Malcolm.

Yours, etc.

NOTES OF INSTRUCTIONS,

ETC.

BY MAJOR-GEN. SIR JOHN MALCOLM,

G.C.B., ETC. ETC.

REFERRED TO IN THE PRECEDING LETTER.

THESE Instructions are grounded upon principles which it has been my constant effort to inculcate upon all officers acting under my orders, and at a period when I am leaving Central India (perhaps not to return) I feel it a duty I owe to them, to myself, and to the public service, to enter into a more full explanation of my sentiments upon the subject of our general and local rule than could have been necessary under any other circumstances.

Almost all who from knowledge and experience have been capable of forming any judgement upon the question, are agreed that our power in India rests on the general opinion of the natives of our comparative superiority, in good faith, wisdom, and

strength, to their own rulers. This important impression will be improved by the consideration we shew to their habits, institutions, and religion, by the moderation, temper, and kindness with which we conduct ourselves towards them; and injured by every act that offends their belief or superstition, that shews disregard or neglect of individuals or communities, or that evinces our having, with the arrogance of conquerors, forgotten those maxims by which this great empire has been established, and by which alone it can be preserved.

The want of union of the natives appears one of the strongest foundations of our power; it has certainly contributed beyond all others to its establishment. But when we trace this cause, we find it to have originated in the condition in which we found India, and the line we adopted towards its inhabitants; that it will continue to operate when the condition of that country is changed, and under any alteration in our course of proceedings, is more than can be assumed. The similarity of the situation of the great proportion of the people of this continent now subject to our rule, will assuredly make them more accessible to common motives of action, which is the foundation of all union; and the absence of that necessity for conciliation which changes have effected, will make us more likely to forget its importance. Our power has hitherto owed much to a contrast with misrule and oppression, but this

strength we are daily losing; we have also been indebted to an indefinite impression of our resources, originating in ignorance of their real extent; knowledge will bring this feeling to a reduced standard. We are supported by the good opinion of the lower and middling classes, to whom our government is indulgent, but it has received the rudest shocks from an impression that our system of rule is at variance with the permanent continuance of rank, authority, and distinction in any native of India. This belief, which is not without foundation, is general to every class, and its action leaves but an anxious and feverish existence to all who enjoy station and high name; the feeling which their condition excites exposes those, who have left to them any portion of power and independence, to the arts of the discontented, the turbulent, and the ambitious. This is a danger to our power which must increase in the ratio of its extent, unless we can counteract its operation by a commensurate improvement of our administration.

Our greatest strength perhaps, and that which gives the fairest hopes of the duration of our rule over India, arises out of the singular construction of the frame of both the controlling and the executive government. Patronage in all the branches of the local government of India is exercised under much limitation and check; favour effects less in this country, and competency more, than in any other

scene of equal magnitude. There is an interminable field for individual exertion, and though men high in station are almost absolute (and the character of our rule requires they should be so), there is in that jealousy of such power, which belongs to our native country, a very efficient shield against its abuse. This keeps men from being intoxicated with their short-lived authority, and the fundamental principles which discourage colonization prevent public servants taking root in the soil, and make them proceed to the duties of government, as they would in other countries to the routine of an office, which employs their talents, without agitating their personal feelings and interests, in any degree that can disturb or bias their judgement. This absence of baneful passions, and all the arts of intrigue and ambition which destroy empires, produces a calmness of mind that can belong alone to the rulers of a country situated as the English employed in India now are, and gives them an advantage which almost balances the bad effects of their want of those national ties that usually constitute the strength of governments.

Our success and moderation contrasted with the misrule and violence to which a great part of the population of India have for more than a century been exposed, have at this moment raised the reputation of the British nation so high, that men have forgotten, in the contemplation of the security

and prosperity they enjoy under strangers, their feelings of patriotism; but these are feelings which that very knowledge that it is our duty to impart, must gradually revive and bring into action. The people of India must, by a recurring sense of benefits, have amends made them for the degradation of continuing subject to foreign masters, and this can alone be done by the combined efforts of every individual employed in stations of trust and responsibility, to render popular a government which, though not national, has its foundations laid deep on the principles of toleration, justice, and wisdom. Every agent of government should study and understand the above facts. He should not content himself with having acquired a knowledge of the languages and of the customs of those with whom he has intercourse. All his particular acts (even to the manner of them) should be regulated by recurrence to the foundation of our rule, and a careful observation of those principles by which it has been established, and can alone be maintained. Of the importance of this I cannot better state my opinion than by expressing my full conviction, that independent of the prescribed duties which every qualified officer performs, there is no person in a situation of any consequence, who does not, both in the substance and manner of his conduct, do something every day in his life, which, as it operates upon the general interests of the empire, through the feelings

of the circle he controls or rules, has an unseen effect in strengthening or weakening the government by which he is employed. My belief that what I have assumed is correct, will be my excuse for going into some minuteness in my general Instructions to those under my orders.

The first and one of the most important points, is the manner of European superiors towards the natives. It would be quite out of place in this paper, to speak of the necessity of kindness, and of an absence of all violence,—this must be a matter of course with those to whom it is addressed; there is much more required from them than that conciliation, which is a duty, but which, when it appears as such, loses half its effect. It must to make an impression be a habit of the mind, grounded on a favourable consideration of the qualities and merits of those to whom it extends, and this impression I am satisfied every person will have, who, after attaining a thorough knowledge of the real character of those with whom he has intercourse, shall judge them without prejudice or self-conceit, by a standard which is suited to their belief, their usages, their habits, their occupations, their rank in life, the ideas they have imbibed from infancy, and the stage of civilization to which the community as a whole are advanced. If he does so with that knowledge and that temper of mind which is essential to render him competent to form an opinion, he will find

enough of virtue, enough of docility and disposition to improvement, enough of regard and observance of all the best and most sacred ties of society, to create an esteem for individuals, and an interest in the community which, when grounded on a sincere conviction of its being deserved, will render his kindness natural and conciliating. All human beings, down to the lowest links of the chain, inclusive of children, are quick in tracing the source of the manners of others, and above all, of their superiors; when that is regulated by the head, not the heart, when it proceeds from reason, not from feeling, it cannot please, for it has in it, if at all artificial, a shew of design which repels as it generates suspicion. When this manner takes another shape, when kindness and consideration appear as acts of condescension, it must be felt as offensive;—men may dread, but can never love or regard those who are continually humiliating them by the parade of superiority.

I have recommended those foundations of manner towards the natives of India, upon which I feel my own to be grounded. I can recollect (and I do it with shame) the period when I thought I was very superior to those with whom my duty made me associate, but as my knowledge of them and of myself improved, the distance between us gradually lessened. I have seen and heard much of our boasted advantages over them, but cannot think

that if all the ranks of the different communities of Europe and India are comparatively viewed, that there is just ground for any very arrogant feeling on the part of the inhabitants of the former; nor can I join in that common-place opinion which condemns in a sweeping way the natives of this country as men, taking the best of them, not only unworthy of trust and devoid of principle, but of too limited intelligence and reach of thought, to allow of Europeans with large and liberal minds and education having rational or satisfactory intercourse with them.

Such impressions, if admitted, must prove vital as to the manner of treating the natives of India: I shall therefore say a few words upon the justice of the grounds upon which they rest. The man who considers them in this light, can grant little or no credit to the high characters and the eulogies which are given to individuals and great bodies of men, in their own histories, traditions, and records. He must then judge them by his own observations and knowledge, and his opinion will, in all probability, be formed, not comparatively with Europeans of their own class of life, but with the public servants of government, a class of men who are carefully educated, whose ambition is stimulated by the highest prospects of preferment, and whose integrity is preserved by adequate salaries through every grade of their service. Before this last principle was introduced (which is little more than thirty years), the

European servants of government were in the habit of making money in modes not dissimilar to those we now reproach the natives in our employ with doing; and it may here be asked, if the same endeavours have been made to alter the habits of the latter as the former? I believe the exact contrary to be the fact, and that the system since introduced, has not operated more to elevate the European, than to sink and depress the native character, but this is not the place for the discussion of this large question.

Many of the moral defects of the natives of India are to be referred to that misrule and oppression from which they are now in a great degree emancipated. I do not know the example of any great population, in similar circumstances, preserving through such a period of changes and tyrannical rule, so much of virtue and so many good qualities as are to be found in a great proportion of the inhabitants of this country. This is to be accounted for, in some degree, by the institutions of the Hindoo, particularly that of caste, which appears to have raised them to their present rank in human society, at a very remote period, but it has certainly tended to keep them stationary at that point of civil order to which they were thus early advanced. With a just admiration of the effects of many of their institutions, particularly those parts of them which cause in vast classes not merely an absence

of the common vices of theft, drunkenness, and violence, but preserve all the virtuous ties of family and kindred relations, we must all deplore some of their usages and weak superstitions: but what individuals, or what races of men are without great and manifold errors and imperfections, and what mind that is not fortified with ignorance or pride can, on such grounds, come to a severe judgement against a people like that of India?

I must here, however, remark, that I have invariably found, unless in a few cases where knowledge had not overcome self-sufficiency and arrogance, that in proportion as European officers, civil and military, advanced in their acquaintance with the language and customs of the natives of India, they became more sincerely kind to them, and on the contrary, ignorance always accompanied that selfish pride and want of consideration, which held them light, or treated them with harshness.

I am quite satisfied in my own mind, that if there is one cause more than another that will impede our progress to the general improvement of India, it is a belief formed by its population, from the manner of their English superiors, that they are viewed by them as an inferior and degraded race; but, on the contrary, if the persons employed in every branch of the administration of this great country, while their conduct marks those rigid principles of virtue and justice under the check of which

they act, comport themselves towards the people, whom it is their duty to make happy, with that sincere humility of heart which always belongs to real knowledge, and which attaches while it elevates, they will contribute by such manner, more than any measure of boasted wisdom ever can, to the strength and duration of their government.

It is of importance before I conclude this part of the subject to state my opinion, that in our manner to the natives, though it is our duty to understand and to pay every proper deference to their customs and usages, and to conform to these as far as we can with propriety, particularly on points where the religious prejudices or the rank of those with whom we have intercourse require it, yet we should always preserve the European; for to adopt their manners is a departure from the very principle on which every impression of our superiority, that rests upon good foundation, is grounded. We should take a lesson on such points from what we see occur to native princes and others, who ape English habits and modes; they lose ground with one class, that to which they belong, without gaining with the other, that to which they wish to approximate. The fact is, they ultimately lose with the latter, for even their attachment is useless when they cease to have influence with their own tribe. The European officer who assumes native manners and usages may please a few individuals, who are flattered or profited by

his departure from the habits of his country; but even with these, familiarity will not be found to increase respect, and the adoption of such a course will be sure to sink him in the estimation of the mass of the community, both European and native, among whom he resides.

The intercourse to be maintained with the natives within your circle is of two kinds, private and official.

The first should extend as much as possible to all ranks and classes, and be as familiar, as kind, and as frequent, as the difference of habits and pursuits will admit.

There is a veil between the natives of India and their European superiors, which leaves the latter ignorant in an extraordinary degree of the real character of the former. He can only judge his own domestics by what he sees of their conduct in his presence; of the manner in which they perform their other duties in life he is, if not ignorant, but imperfectly informed; so many minute obstacles, grounded upon caste, usages, and religion, oppose an approach to closer acquaintance, that it can never be generally attained; but in private intercourse much may be learnt that will facilitate the performance of public duty, and give that knowledge of the usages and feelings of the various classes of the natives, which will enable its possessors to touch every chord with effect.

In joining with them in field sports, in an unceremonious interchange of visits with the most respectable, and in seeking the society of the most learned, the European public officer will not only gain much information, but impart complete confidence, and lay the grounds of that personal attachment which will ever be found of the greatest aid to his public labours. He will also obtain by such habits of private intercourse the means of elevating those he esteems by marks of notice and regard; but in pursuing this course he must beware lest he lose his object, by falling into the weaknesses or indulgences of the persons with whom he thus associates. It is in the performance of this part of his duty, when all the pride of station is laid aside, that he must most carefully guard that real superiority which he derives from better knowledge and truer principles of morality and religion; for it is from the impression made by the possession, without the ostentation, of those higher qualities, that he must expect the benefits I have described as likely to result from a familiar and private intercourse with the natives under his direction and control.

In all official intercourse with the natives, one of the first points of importance is, that these, whatever be their rank, class, or business, should have complete and easy access to personal communication with their European superior. The necessity of this arises out of the character of our rule, and of

those over whom it is established. It is sufficiently galling for the people of India to have foreign masters; the impression this feeling must continually excite can only be mitigated or removed by a recurring sense of the advantages they derive from the wisdom and justice of their European superiors, and this can alone be effected by direct communication with them. Though native servants must be employed and trusted, and though it is quite essential to behave to all with kindness, and to raise the higher classes of them by a treatment which combines consideration and respect, yet they can never, without hazard, be used as exclusive mediums of communication: their real or supposed influence will, under any circumstances that they are allowed frequent approach to an European officer in the exercise of authority, give them opportunities of abusing his confidence if they desire it; and as our servants, who are seldom selected from the higher classes, cannot be supposed to have even the same motives with those of native rulers for good conduct, much less the same title to regard, men under our power will have, in aggravation of the feeling arising out of subjection to foreign rule, that of being to a certain extent at the mercy of persons of their own nation, whom they neither trust nor respect.

There is no remedy for such an evil except being completely easy of access; but this, however much

the superior may desire it, is not to be established without difficulty and perseverance; it affects the interest and consequence of every man in his employ, from the highest to the lowest; but in proportion to their efforts to counteract it, so must his be to carry this important point, on which, more than all others, the integrity of his personal administration and the good of the country depend. No native servant, high or low, must be allowed the privilege of either introducing or stopping an applicant or a complainant; all such must come with confidence to the European superior, or to such assistant as he may specifically direct to receive or hear them. It requires much temper and patience, constant activity, and no slight sacrifice of personal comfort, to maintain an intercourse with the natives upon this footing; but unless it be done (I speak here from the fullest experience), the government of control now established in Central India cannot be carried on for any period, and the changes which must ensue from relaxation in this particular, will be brought about in the manner most unfavourable to our character and reputation.

In establishing this direct personal intercourse, it is perhaps better, when the habits are so formed as to admit of it, that natives of all classes and ranks should have admission, and be heard at any hour of the day that they come, except those of meals; but where such constant intrusion is found to interrupt

other business, as it may be with many, certain portions of every day must be set aside to hear representations and complaints, and to see those who desire to be seen. The establishment of direct intercourse is, in my opinion, a primary and indispensable duty, and one no more dependent upon the inclination or judgment of the individuals to whom the charge of managing or controlling these countries is entrusted, than it is to an officer whether he shall attend his parade, or to a judge whether he shall sit a certain number of hours in his court; indeed I consider that late events have so completely altered our condition in India, that the duties of almost every officer in the political department have become, in a great degree, magisterial, and as such must be more defined and subject to more exact rules than they formerly were.

Our right of interference (as will be shewn hereafter) is so limited, that it is not in one case in a hundred of those that are brought forward, that an officer can do more than state calmly and clearly to the party who seeks redress the reasons and principles which prevent him from attending to his representation or complaint. He will have to repeat this perhaps fifty times in one day, but he must, in contemplating the good that will be ultimately produced, be content to take this trouble. The natives of India cannot persuade themselves that, possessing as we do, the means of establishing our direct rule,

we shall long refrain from doing so. This impression weakens those princes, chiefs, and ministers, whom it is our policy to support, in a degree that almost unfits them for being instruments of government. We can only counteract its bad effects by making ourselves understood by all, even to the lowest, upon this point; it is one on which they never will trust to a communication from any native agent or servant, nor indeed will they be convinced of our sincerity till they observe for years that our words and actions are in unison, and they must, to satisfy them that there is no prospect of those fluctuations to which they have been so habituated, see that every thing originates with, and is known to, the superior; this knowledge, added to the right of approaching him at all moments, will gradually tranquillize their minds, and place them, as far as they can be placed, beyond the power of being made the dupes of artful or interested men.

It has been before said, that native servants of all classes should be treated with that attention and respect to which they were from their station and character entitled. These will of course have at all times the freest intercourse with the superior, but they should never have the privilege of coming to any conference between him and other natives to which they were not specifically called; but these servants (whatever might be their inclinations) will have little power of doing harm, when a direct in-

tercourse (such as has been described) is well established, and its principles and objects generally understood. Indeed one of the best effects of that intercourse is the check it constitutes on all nefarious proceedings of subordinate agents and persons of every description, as such must act in hourly dread of discovery when every man can tell his own story to the principal at any moment he pleases.

The next important point to be observed in official intercourse with the natives is "publicity." There can be no occasion to expatiate here upon the utility of this principle. It is the happy privilege of a state so constituted as that of the English in India, to gain strength in the ratio that its measures and the grounds on which they are adopted are made public, and this is above all essential in a quarter of India where we are as yet but imperfectly understood. There are and can be no secrets in our ordinary proceedings, and every agent will find his means of doing good advanced, his toil lessened, and the power of the designing and corrupt to misrepresent his actions or intentions decreased in the proportion that he transacts affairs in public. He should avoid, as much as he possibly can, private conferences with those in his employ or others. These will be eagerly sought for; they give the individual thus admitted the appearance of favour and influence, and there is no science at which the more artful among the natives are greater

adepts, than that of turning to account the real or supposed confidence of their superiors. I know no mode of preventing the mischief which this impression, if it becomes general, gives men the power of effecting, but habitual publicity in transacting business. This will, no doubt, be found to have inconveniences which will be purposely increased by those who have their game to play, and indeed others; for natives of rank and station, even when they have no corrupt views, are from habit and self-importance attached to a secret and mysterious way of conducting both great and small affairs.

A public officer placed in your situation must always be vigilant and watchful of events likely to affect the peace of the country under his charge, but no part of his duty requires such care and wisdom in its performance. He cannot rest in blind confidence, nor refuse attention to obvious and well authenticated facts; but he must be slow in giving his ear, or in admitting to private and confidential intercourse, secret agents and informers, lest these make an impression (which will be their object) upon his mind; for there is no failing of human nature to which the worst part of the natives of India have learnt (from the shape of their own government) so well to address themselves, as any disposition to suspicion in their superiors. From the condition of Central India, abounding as it must with discontented and desperate characters, in-

trigues, treasonable conversations and papers, and immature plots, must for some time be matters of frequent occurrence and growth, but such will in general be best left to perish of neglect. Established as our power now is, men cannot collect any means capable of shaking it without being discovered; and it is I am convinced under all ordinary circumstances, wiser and safer to incur petty hazard than to place individuals and communities at the mercy of artful and avaricious agents and spies, or to goad unfortunate men to a state of hostility by continually viewing them with an eye of torturing and degrading suspicion.

In the intercourse with the natives of your circle, it is hardly necessary to advert to the subject of giving and receiving presents. The recent orders upon this subject which have been communicated to you are very defined and strict; but there is a necessity in this government of control for every agent to maintain, on a high ground, not only the purity, but the disinterestedness of the English character, and you will avoid, as much as you possibly can, incurring any obligation to local authorities. These will sedulously endeavour to promote your convenience and comfort, and will press favours upon you both from design and good feeling; but there is a strength in preserving complete independence on all such points that must not be abandoned. Our political superiority to be efficient must be unmixed

with any motives or concerns, either connected with our personal interest or that of others, that can soil or weaken that impression on which its successful exercise depends.

The forms of the official intercourse between European agents and natives of rank were, before we obtained paramount power, a matter of more moment, and one on which we could less relax than at present, because our motives were at that period more liable to be mistaken. Though it is essential in our intercourse with nations who are attached to, and give value to ceremonies, to understand such perfectly, and to claim from all what is due to our station, that we may not sink the rank of the European superior in the estimation of those subject to his control, it is now the duty of the former to be much more attentive to the respect which he gives than what he receives, particularly in his intercourse with men of high rank. The princes and chiefs of India may in different degrees be said to be all dependent on the British government; many have little more than the name of that power they before enjoyed, but they seem, as they lose the substance, to cling to the forms of station. The pride of reason may smile at such a feeling, but it exists, and it would be alike opposite to the principles of humanity and policy to deny it gratification.

In official intercourse with the lower classes, the

latter should be treated according to the usages of the country as practised by the most indulgent of their native superiors. It will be found that they require personal notice and consideration in proportion as their state is removed from that knowledge which belongs to civilization, and it is on this ground that the Bheel must have more attention paid him than the Ryot; it is more difficult to give confidence to his mind, and to make him believe in the sincerity and permanence of the kindness with which he is treated, because he is in a condition more remote from the party with whom he communicates, and before he can be reclaimed he must be approximated.

The interference of agents employed in this country with native princes or courts or their local officers cannot be exactly defined, for there will be shades of distinction in every case that will require attention; but all must be subject, and that in the strictest degree, to certain general and well understood principles founded on the nature of our power, our objects, our political relations with the different states, the personal conduct of their rulers, their necessity for our aid and support, and their disposition to require or reject it in the conduct of their internal administration. The leading principle, and the one which must be continually referred to, is grounded on the character of our controlling power and its objects. It is the avowed and I am

satisfied it is the true policy of the British state, while it maintains the general peace of the country, to keep, not only in the enjoyment of their high rank, but in the active exercise of their sovereign functions, the different princes and chiefs who are virtually or declaredly dependent on its protection. The principal object (setting aside the obligations of faith) is to keep at a distance that crisis to which, in spite of our efforts, we are gradually approaching, of having the whole of India subject to our direct rule. There is no intention of discussing here the consequences likely to result from such an event. It is sufficient for executive and subordinate officers to know that it is the desire of the government they serve to keep it at a distance, to render it their duty to contribute their whole efforts to promote the accomplishment of that object, and on the manner and substance of their interference the local success of this policy will greatly depend.

On all points where we are pledged by treaty to support states or to mediate or interfere between them and others, we must of course act agreeably to the obligations contracted, and in such case no instructions can be required. It may not however be unuseful to remark, that on all occasions where they are referred to, treaties and engagements should be interpreted with much consideration to the prince or chief with whom they are made. There is often, from opposite education and habits, much difference

between their construction and ours of such engagements; but no loose observation or even casual departure from the letter of them ought to lead to serious consequences, when it appeared there was no intention of violating the spirit of the deed or of acting contrary to pledged faith. When any article of an engagement is doubtful, I think it should be invariably explained with more leaning to the expectations originally raised in the weaker than to the interests of the stronger power. It belongs to superior authority to give ultimate judgment upon all points of this nature which come under discussion, but that judgment must always be much influenced by the colour of the information and opinion of the local agent. My desire is to convey how important every subject is that connects in the remotest degree with that reputation for good faith which can only be considered our strength while it exists unimpaired in the minds of the natives, and in this view the most scrupulous attention should be paid to their understanding of every article of the agreements we make with them, for no local advantage, nor the promotion of any pecuniary interest, can compensate for the slightest injury to this corner-stone to our power in India.

With the government of Dowlut Rao Scindea (a great part of whose possessions are intermixed with those of our dependent allies in this quarter) we have only general relations of amity; and how-

ever virtually dependent events may have rendered that prince, we can (excepting insisting upon the exact performance of those settlements which we have mediated between him or his delegated officers and some of his tributaries) claim no right of interference in any part of his internal administration, nor should there, unless in cases of unexpected emergency, which threatened the general peace of the country, be any disposition shown to interference, except on specific requisition from the resident at Gwalior. Without interfering, however, we have hitherto, and shall continue to exercise a very salutary control both over Dowlut Rao Scindea and his local officers by the terms on which we communicate and act with the latter. When these are men of good character, and study the happiness of the inhabitants and the improvement of the country, we can, by the cordiality and consideration with which we treat them, and the ready attention we give to the settlement of every petty dispute they have with the subjects of our allies as well as other friendly acts, grant them a countenance and aid which greatly facilitates their success in their local administration. The same principle leads to abstinence from all communication, and to our keeping aloof (except where the general peace is at hazard) from all intercourse with those of Scindea's managers who are noted for misrule or bad faith. This line of conduct towards the latter, grounded as it pub-

licly should be, on the avowed principle of keeping our character free of soil from their proceedings, locally increases our reputation, while it has the effect of rendering the employment of such men inconvenient and unprofitable to the state, and thus constitutes one of the chief means we have of working a reform in its internal administration; nor is it a slight one, for the impression of our power is so great, that the belief of a local officer possessing our good opinion and friendship is of itself sufficient to repress opposition to his authority, while his forfeiting our favour is sure to raise him enemies both in his district and at Gwalior.

With the courts of Holcar, Dhar, Dewass, and almost all the petty Raj-poot states west of the Chumbul, our relations are different. These have been raised from a weak and fallen condition to one of efficiency through our efforts. But though compelled at first to aid them in almost every settlement, we have, as they attained the power of acting for themselves, gradually withdrawn from minute interference on points connected with their internal administration, limiting ourselves to what is necessary for the maintenance of the public tranquillity.

There is so strong a feeling in the minds of the princes and chiefs above alluded to, and in those of all their officers (from their prime minister down to the lowest agent) of their actual dependence upon

the British government, that it is almost impossible to make them understand that they are, in the conduct of their internal administration, desired and expected to act independent of it. Their difficulty of comprehending and trusting the policy which dictates our conduct in this particular, arises out of its being opposite to all their habits and knowledge. Time alone, and the most minute care of every European agent employed, can impart to them that confidence which is essential to their becoming competent functionaries of rule. To effect this object, the principles hitherto inculcated and acted upon must be steadily pursued, and we must decline all interference, except in cases where Grassiahs, Bheels, or other plunderers are concerned; these, from their situation or strength, can only be kept in order by the power of the British government, and we must in such cases even have the limits of our interference exactly defined, that no belief may exist of our possessing the power of departing from the restrictions we have imposed upon ourselves; for on such impressions being general, and being confirmed by scrupulous consistency of action, depends our success in giving that efficiency to the various native authorities subject to our control, which is necessary to enable them to perform the different duties allotted to them.

In cases of interference with lesser rulers, such as the reformed Raj-poot plunderers and Bheel chiefs,

we may be compelled to enter more minutely into their affairs, but the principles observed should be the same; and while we take care to repress every disposition to a return to predatory habits, and see that men who have long cherished such, possess themselves of honest means of livelihood, we must respect their prejudices, and not hastily break in upon the rude frame of their internal rule, but leave (down to the Turvee or head of the Bheel Parah or cluster of hamlets,) the full exercise of his authority over those under him, according as that is grounded on the ancient prejudices and usages of the tribe to which he and his family or followers belong.

The feelings of irritation and hatred with which almost all the princes and chiefs of this quarter regard the Grassiahs and Bheels, and the total want of confidence of the latter in their nominal superiors, have and will continue to render calls for our interference very frequent; but however high the character and condition of the one party, and however bad and low that of the other may be, we must never grant our name or support to measures of coercion or violence without fully understanding the merits of the case, nor without having had direct communication with the party or parties inculpated; otherwise we may be involved in embarrassment, and become unconsciously the instruments of injustice and oppression.

Many questions will occur deeply connected with our reputation for good faith, which cannot be decided by any exact rules, but whenever that is concerned, the tone of our feeling should be very high. It is the point upon which the moral part of our government of this great empire hinges, and in these countries, where our rule and control are new, and in which the inhabitants cannot yet understand any explanations that do not rest upon broad and obvious grounds, the subject requires much attention. There are many cases in which our faith, though not specifically, is virtually pledged to individuals; ministers, for instance, of minor or incompetent princes or chiefs, who have been brought forward or recognized by us in the exercise of authority, have a claim upon our support and consideration, which nothing but bad conduct on their part can forfeit; we should no doubt be most careful in any interference that leads to such obligations. They are only to be incurred when a necessity that involves the peace and prosperity of the country calls for them, but they must be sacredly observed; for with a people who look, in all questions of government, more to persons than systems, the abandonment, except from gross misconduct of any individual, who had been raised or openly protected by us, would excite stronger feelings than the breach of an article of a treaty, and locally prove more injurious as it weakens

that reliance upon our faith, which is the very foundation of our strength.

We may rest satisfied while we pursue the course I have stated, (and it is the one to which our faith is almost in every case, either directly or by implication, pledged,) that we have from our paramount power a very efficient check over states and tribes, whose rulers, officers, and chiefs will soon discover that they can only gain our favour and support by good conduct, or forfeit it by bad. With such knowledge and with means comparatively limited, we cannot expect they will be disposed to incur displeasure, when the terms on which they can gain approbation are so easy; at least no men possessed of common sense and discernment (qualities in which the natives of India are seldom deficient) can be expected to act in such a manner. But we must not conceal from ourselves that their conduct in this, as in all other particulars, will rest chiefly on the value of that condition in which they are placed, or rather left; and in proportion that we render it one of comfort and dignity, so will their care be to preserve our good opinion, and to merit our confidence. It is indeed upon our success in supporting their respectability that the permanence of a system of control over great and small native states, such as we have established in this quarter of India, will depend; we have no choice of means in the performance of this delicate and arduous part of our

duty: though the check must be efficient, it should be almost unseen; the effect ought to be produced more by the impression than the exercise of superior power; our principal object must be to elevate the authorities to whom we have left the administration of their respective territories: we must, in all cases of interference, bring them forward to their own subjects as the prominent objects of respect and obedience. So far from the agent attracting any to himself, he should purposely repel it that it may be given to the quarter where it is wanted, and to which it belongs. When we aid any prince or chief against his own subjects, his name should be exclusively used, and we should be most careful in making our native agents and servants pay the full measure of respect to every branch of his administration, and continually be on the watch to check that disposition which is inherent in them to slight local authorities; that they may, in the name of their master, draw that attention to themselves which it is quite essential should belong to the officers of the native government. It is evident that our control can only be supportable to any human being who has the name and appearance of power, so long as it is exercised in a general manner and regulated by the principles above stated; when it descends to minute checks and interference in the collection of revenue, the administration of justice listens to the complaints of discontented or

even aggrieved individuals, and allows upon system its own native agents to interfere, and act in the name of the paramount state; the continuance of independent power in any shape to either prince or chief, is not only impolitic but dangerous, as his condition must be felt by himself and by all attached to his person or family as a mockery and degradation, and the least effect of such feelings will be the extermination of all motive to good or great actions; for when control is divested of its large and liberal character, and takes a more minute shape, whatever merit belongs to the administration becomes the due of the person by whom it is exercised, or his agents, and the nominal prince and his officers are degraded into suspected and incompetent instruments of rule.

In this general outline of our interference with the rulers, great and small, of this part of India, I have dwelt much upon the political considerations upon which it is grounded, because I am convinced that there is no part of the subject that requires to be so deeply studied and so fully understood as this should be by every subordinate agent, for there is no point of his duty which is at once so delicate and arduous, or in which success or failure so much depends upon individual exertion. He will be prompted to deviate from the course prescribed by the action of his best feelings, and by the hopes of increasing his personal reputation, but he will be kept steady in that course by a knowledge of the

importance of those general principles on which the present system rests. It is in the performance of this part of his duty, that all which has been said regarding manner and intercourse must be in his memory; for men in the situation in which those are, with whom he must in all cases of interference come in contact, are not to be conciliated to their condition, nor kept in that temper towards the paramount authority, which is necessary for its interest they should be, by mere correctness or strict attention to justice. The native state must be courted and encouraged to good conduct, and the earnest endeavour of the British agent must be to give their rulers a pride in their administration, to effect which object he must win to his side, not only the rulers themselves, but the principal and most respectable men of the country. In his efforts to gain the latter, however, he must beware of depriving the local authority of that public opinion which is so essential, both as a check to misrule, and a reward to good government, but which would cease to be felt as either, the moment the ties between prince and subject were seriously injured or broken.

Where the public peace, of which we are avowed protectors, has been violated, or where murders or robberies have been committed, we have a right to urge the local authorities (whom we aid both with means for the prevention and punishment of such crimes) to pursue, according to their own usages, the course best calculated to preserve the safety of per-

sons and of property. In other cases connected with the administration of justice, though there is no right of interference, it will be for their interest and for our reputation to lose no opportunity of impressing generally the benefit and good name that will result from attention to ancient institutions, particularly to that of the popular courts of punchayut, which have never been discontinued but in periods marked by anarchy and oppression.

The practice of suttee is not frequent in Malwa, and that of infanticide is I believe less so. The first is a usage which, however shocking to humanity, has defenders among every class of the Hindoo community. The latter is held in abhorrence by all but the Raj-poot families, by whom it is practised and to whom it is confined, for many of the most respectable chiefs of that tribe speak of this crime with all the horror it merits. You cannot interfere in the prevention of either of these sacrifices, beyond the exercise of that influence which you possess from personal character, indeed, to attempt more would be at the hazard of making wrong impressions and of defeating the end you desired to attain. Praise of those who abstain from such acts, and neglect of those who approve or perpetrate them, is the best remedy that can be applied. It is the course I have pursued, and has certainly been attended with success.

That the line of interference which has been de-

scribed is difficult, will not be denied, but what course can we discover for the future rule and control of the different native states of India, which does not present a choice of difficulties? Men are too apt, at the first view of this great subject, to be deluded by a desire to render easy, and to simplify what is not in nature should be otherwise than difficult and complicated. Moral considerations come in aid of the warmest and best sentiments of the human mind to entice us to innovation; we feel ourselves almost the sharers of that crime and misrule, which we think our interference could mitigate or amend, and in the fervour of our virtue we are too apt to forget, that temporary or partial benefit often entails lasting and general evil; that every plan, however theoretically good, must be practically bad that is imperfectly executed. We forget in the pride of our superior knowledge the condition of others, and self gratification makes almost every man desire to crowd into the few years of his official career the work of half a century. Thus measures have been, and continue to be brought forward in advance of the community, for whose benefit they are intended. Of what has passed it is not necessary to speak, the future is in our power; and I cannot conclude this part of the subject which relates to an interference that is calculated, according as it is managed, to hasten or retard the introduction of our direct rule, without impressing upon

every officer employed under my orders, the importance of a conduct calculated to preserve while it improves the established governments and native authorities of the country. To these it is his duty to give such impulse as he can, without injuring their frame, towards an amendment suited to their situation, to the character of the rulers, and to that of the various classes under their rule. I consider, and the opinion is the result of both experience and reflection, that all dangers to our power in India are slight, in comparison with that which is likely to ensue from our too zealous efforts to change the condition of its inhabitants, with whom we are yet, in my opinion, but very imperfectly acquainted. A person who entertains such sentiments as I do upon this question, must appear the advocate of very slow reform; but if I am so, it is from a full conviction that any thing like precipitation in our endeavour at improvement is likely to terminate in casting back those we desire to advance; on the contrary, if, instead of over-marching, we are content to go along with this immense population, and to be in good temper with their prejudices, their religion, and usages, we may gradually win them to better ways of thinking and of acting. The latter process, no doubt, must be one of great time, but its success will be retarded by every hasty step.

There are few points on which more care is required, than the selection and employment of native

servants for the public service. The higher classes of these, such as moonshees, mootasuddies, and writers, should be men of regular habits of life, intelligent, and of good character in their own tribes. There is no objection to an officer continuing to keep in service a person he has brought from a distant province, who has been long with him, and on whose fidelity and competence he can repose; but generally speaking, it is much better to entertain respectable natives, or old residents of the country in which he is employed; such may have looser habits and be less attached, but the former his vigilance will check and correct, and attachment will soon be created by kindness and consideration. Their advantages over foreigners are very numerous. The principal are their acquaintance with the petty interests of the country, and their knowledge of all the prejudices and the jealousies of the different classes of the community to which they belong. On all these points the superior should be minutely informed; and if he employs men not personally acquainted with the disposition and condition of those under his charge or control, his information on such subjects must come through multiplied mediums, which is in itself a serious evil. But independent of this, the employment of the natives of a distant province is always unpopular, and they are generally viewed with dislike and suspicion by the higher and more respectable classes of the country into which

they are introduced. This excites a feeling in the minds of the former, which either makes them keep aloof from all connection with the inhabitants, or seek the society, and use as instruments, men who are discontented or of indifferent character. It is difficult to say which of these causes has the worst effect; the one gives an impression of pride, if not contempt, and the other of design and an inclination to intrigue, and both operate unfavourably to the local reputation of the master.

I have observed that the natives who are least informed of the principles of our rule, are ready to grant a respect and confidence to an English officer which they refuse to persons of their own tribe, but they are apt to form an unfavourable opinion of his disposition and character from any bad conduct of his native servants if foreigners; on the contrary, when the latter are members of their own community, the exposure of their errors or crimes, while it brings shame and conveys a salutary lesson to the class to which they belong, is attended with the effect of raising, instead of depressing, the European superior in their estimation. To all these general reasons might be added many grounded on the particular condition of central India. The oppression the inhabitants of this quarter have recently suffered, both from Hindoo and Mahomedan natives of the Deccan and Hindoostan, makes them

naturally alarmed at these classes. There is also in the impoverished state of many of the best families of the country a strong additional reason for our giving them, in preference to strangers, what little we can of salary as public servants.

In the above observations there is no desire to exclude any member of Deccan or Hindoostan families, who have settled for life or for several generations in Malwa; such objection would proscribe from our employ some of the most intelligent and respectable inhabitants of that province.

It has been before mentioned that publicity in our transaction of business is most essential, chiefly as it puts at repose an alarmed and agitated population and, beyond all, their princes and chiefs. We may greatly promote this object by the selection of servants. I early observed a very serious uneasiness, if not alarm, in Holkar's ministers, regarding the course I meant to pursue towards that court, and as one means of removing it I chose as a principal native writer an intelligent Bramin, whose family were attached to that of Holkar, in whose employ I found him, and who could, I knew, from his connections, have no permanent interests separate from his duty to that state; I was conscious of having nothing to conceal, but I knew the importance of Tantia Jogue and others being satisfied that this was the case. No measure I have

adopted has tended more to tranquillize their minds, and I state the fact because its application may be suited to cases of daily occurrence.

In the employment of the higher classes of native servants, they should as much as possible be restricted to their specific duties, and no one should be allowed to take a lead or mix (unless when directed) in the occupation of another. The keeping of these persons in their exact places will be found difficult, from the habits of the natives being opposite to such rules; but it is essential, for errors, if not guilt, will be the certain consequence of a confusion of duties, which destroys that pride which good men feel from possessing confidence, and enables bad to evade that personal responsibility which constitutes the chief check upon their conduct.

The employment of the lower classes of public servants requires much attention. These should be selected on the same principles that have already been stated, with reference to the duties they are to perform (which ought always to be exactly defined) and their conduct vigilantly watched. It will indeed be found useful to render as public as possible the nature of their employment, and to call upon all local authorities to aid us in the prevention of those unauthorized and odious acts of injustice and oppression towards the inhabitants of the country, which this class will, in spite of all our efforts, find opportunities of committing. I speak from the

fullest experience when I state, that though the natives of India may do full justice to the purity of our intentions and the excellence of the principles of our rule, they are undisguised in their sentiments regarding those parts of our administration in which the very dregs of their own community are employed. They cannot indeed but see with feelings of detestation and resentment a man, raised from the lowest of their own ranks, and decorated with the official badge or stick of a civil or political English officer, become the very next moment insolent to persons to whom he and his family have been for ages submissive, or turn the extortioner of money from those tribes among which he has before lived as an humble individual.

The power of this class of servants to injure our reputation is everywhere great, but more so in the proportion that the natives of the country are ignorant of our real character, and where their dread of our power is excessive: of the mischief they have done, or rather tried to do, in Malwa, I can speak from a perfect knowledge. I have endeavoured, with unremitting solicitude, to counteract their impositions and oppression, by publishing proclamations, and giving high rewards to all who informed upon or seized any of my servants when attempting the slightest interference in the country, or affecting to have any business beyond that of carrying a letter, or some specified or limited duty; but I have, never-

theless, been compelled, within three years, to punish publicly and discharge, one moonshee, two moota-suddies, or writers, three jemadars, and upwards of fifty hircarrahs, and almost an equal number of the same class belonging to other public officers, have been taken and punished, or banished the country. These examples will show the danger of being tempted by any convenience of service, or a desire to accelerate the accomplishment of our objects, to employ such instruments with any latitude of action.

The importance of encouraging the dependent states of India to do their own work, and to lean on points of internal administration as little as possible upon us, has been before noticed; and as long as we manage to keep clear of that species of interference which weakens and unsettles, without any proportionate good to balance its evil effects, we shall have credit in general opinion for all the good measures which the state under our protection adopts, and our reputation will be benefited (from the comparisons that are drawn) even by its acts of folly and injustice; but the latter advantage will be lost by any half and impolitic mixture in its concerns, and there is no mode in which this will be found so injurious as that of granting it the aid of native servants in our employ. Allowing the higher classes of these to enter into the affairs of such governments in any shape, would be destruc-

tive of every principle that has been inculcated; but the giving their rulers, ministers, or local officers, the aid of our lower servants, would be still more to the injury of our reputation; for among the higher classes we might find men of virtue and firmness of character beyond what could be expected from the others when exposed, as they would be, to much temptation. They would be used for purposes of coercion, if not oppression, and there would be sufficient art in those who thus employed them to throw (when that was their object) the odium of what these instruments did upon the English government; but in general their desire would be limited to have the aid of the British name to alarm into compliance with their demands individuals or communities. They would be aware that the hircarrah or servant sent to assist their authority was a check upon their proceedings, and this would lead to his being bribed; and if he did not become an instrument of violence, it would only be because he received higher wages from the party he was sent to oppress.

I have seen such manifold instances of the bad effects resulting from the employment of this class in the manner described, that I have for more than three years peremptorily refused any such aid to native chiefs, and must require all those under my orders to do the same. The best answer to all applications upon this subject is, that compliance is at

variance with the system ordered to be pursued, and that the usage of granting such aid, though it might be found convenient, and in some cases accelerate the accomplishment of good measures, must in the end produce much evil, and be attended with loss of reputation to the British government, whose good name could not be entrusted to low agents and menials acting beyond the strict and vigilant observation of the European officer.

The right we have to act when the public peace is threatened or disturbed, has been generally noticed under the head of interference; but it will be useful to say a few words on the mode of exercising that right, particularly as it relates to points which are connected with the internal administration of police and criminal justice.

In countries which have been long in the condition of central India, there is a connexion formed between the most powerful and the most apparently insignificant of the disturbers of the public peace, which will for some time require a vigilant attention to every act of the latter to prevent the revival of a disorderly or predatory spirit. In common cases we shall only have to prompt the local authority to exertions. But when our aid is required, and troops, or any persons acting under our orders apprehend delinquents, they should invariably be given over to the ruler or chief in whose countries the crimes were committed, by whom they will be examined and

punished according to the established custom. I have usually limited my interference in this part of the administration of the native states of Malwa to two points. The first is, that in cases of robbery, but particularly cattle (the common booty of Bheels and other plunderers,) there should be restitution to the owners the moment the property was proved, leaving those persons through whose hands it has passed, by real or pretended sales, to have their disputes and recriminations settled, and to recover from each other according to usage. This practice is now general, and its enforcement for the last two years has done more to put an end to Bheel and other robberies, than all the other measures that have been taken. The second point on which I have endeavoured to make a change in practice of the administration of justice in the native states in Malwa, is that of preventing the crime of wilful murder being commuted for the payment of a pecuniary fine; but in all cases of this nature, where circumstances compel us to interfere, it is desirable that no execution should take place till guilt has been clearly proved. The observance of this rule is more necessary, as in cases where the criminals are of a plundering tribe, such as Bheels and Baggrees, the native ruler or chief will be found disposed to deem the mere accusation enough to warrant the punishment. Whereas, it is exactly with such classes that it is of importance to us to be

most particular, lest we lose the impression we desire to make upon them, by becoming in any way accessories to acts of violence or injury.

On all occasions, when the local power is sufficient, it is most desirable to bring it into action, that it may cease to be dependent upon us for the maintenance of the internal peace. This is particularly adviseable where excesses are committed that have either as their real or professed causes superstitions or religious feelings. In such cases, except where the mixture of political motives is manifest and avowed, or the danger imminent, we should call upon the native government by its duty and allegiance to the paramount state, to put down all disturbers of the peace, particularly when fanatics like those lately at Purtabghur combine with their atrocities the avowal of sentiments hostile to our rule. The actual condition of central India makes it likely that such efforts as that above alluded to may be repeated, and they will always (however contemptible they may seem) require to be treated with much delicacy. It should be deemed a guiding principle not to act if we can avoid it; and when absolutely compelled to do so, it is essential that we should appear, not as principals but in support of the local government; for the spirit that engenders such excesses, whether they proceed from intrigue or fanaticism, will only attain strength by opposition, and any violent measures on our part,

however justified by crime or outrage, might make the most unfavourable impressions upon an ignorant and bigoted population who, while they confess all the benefits of our general rule and control, are easily excited to a dread of our success ultimately leading to attempts at changing the religion and institutions of their forefathers.

In cases of rebels or plunderers collecting in such force as to require British troops to suppress them, you will (if the emergency prevents reference to superior authority) make a requisition for aid from the nearest commanding officer that can furnish it.

The rules for such requisitions have been generally notified. The political agent will give the fullest information of the service to be performed, the nature of the country, the character of the enemy and his resources, leaving the military officer, when possessed of such knowledge, the selection of the force, both as to number and equipment, that is to be placed at his disposal; but it is to be strongly impressed upon both, that in a country like central India, the means employed should always be above the object to be accomplished, as failure or defeat in any enterprise or action would be attended with very bad consequences.

It is almost superfluous to repeat what has been sedulously inculcated upon you as a primary duty during the last three years, the adoption of every preventive measure to avert the necessity of the em-

ployment of force. Its appearance has hitherto been almost in all cases sufficient to produce the required effect, and in the few instances where it has been employed, the moment of success has been seized for that of conciliation. To act differently and to pursue those wild tribes who are the common disturbers of the peace with retaliation of outrages beyond what is necessary to evince our power, is to confirm them in their habits, and to add to their other motives of hostility those of resentment and despair. When engaged in warfare with such classes, we should be cautious how we inflict summary punishment on the individuals who fall into our power. These are often the mere instruments of crime, and act in its commission under as strong an impulse of duty to their superiors as the soldier in our ranks; and it is as unreasonable to expect their habits can be changed by making examples of such men, as it would that we could subdue the spirit of a nation by putting to death every soldier belonging to it that we found fighting against us in action. The increased danger in which this placed individuals, would only strengthen that powerful feeling by which they were attached to their leaders, while it added that of revenge against those who treated them with what they would deem cruelty and injustice. It is the duty of all agents of the British government to direct their efforts to effect a change in the frame of these savage communities,

instead of commencing, in imitation of unprincipled and despotic native rulers, an unprofitable and interminable warfare upon individuals who can hardly be termed guilty, when they act by the express order of chiefs to whom and their predecessors they and their fathers have given implicit obedience for centuries. The nature and strength of the ties which subsist in these societies were very fully discovered in the trial of Nadir Singh, the celebrated Bheelalah chief of the Vindiha range. No one has questioned the justice of his punishment; but that of the persons who committed by his order the barbarous crime for which he was exiled, would have been deemed an act of oppression.

One of the most effectual means that you have to maintain the peace, is that of exerting yourself to render all (even the poorest and wildest classes) sensible of the benefits they derive from your protection; there is no point in which this is more required than against the excesses of our troops, camp-followers, merchants who have passes, and in short all who on any ground use the British name. The governments of the different Presidencies have been long sensible to this evil, and have endeavoured by the strictest orders and proclamations to correct it. The pressing of begaries and hackerries has been positively forbidden; but these orders must be enforced with a rigorous and uncompromising spirit by the civil and political authorities, otherwise they

will prove unavailing. This is a point of duty in which I consider those under my orders to have no option or latitude. In the present condition of central India it is one of too much importance, both as it relates to the temper of the inhabitants, and the reviving prosperity of the country, to warrant any deviation, either for the accommodation of individuals or the public service; the former when no longer encouraged by improper and unwise indulgence to trust in any way to the country, will soon learn to be independent of its aid. Public departments will, in like degree, become from providing for their own wants more efficient; and when the inhabitants are satisfied that it is not in the power of any person, whatever be his rank, to press them or their cattle, they will be inspired with a confidence that will lead to their furnishing more resources to troops and travellers from a desire of profit, than has ever yet been extorted by an oppressive system, which, according to all natives I have heard speak upon the subject, has been carried to as great, if not greater, lengths in countries subject to our rule and control, than in the worst of their own governments.

There are I fear many omissions in these notes of Instructions, but an anxiety to render them complete has already made them far longer than was at first intended. One of my chief objects has been to impress, in the most forcible manner, the great

benefits which are to be expected from a kind and conciliating manner and a constant friendly intercourse with those under your direction and control. It is the feelings and knowledge which such habits on your part will inspire, that can alone give effect to the principles of action that have been prescribed for your observance. You are called upon to perform no easy task—to possess power, but seldom to exercise it—to witness abuses which you think you could correct—to see the errors, if not crimes, of superstitious bigotry and the miseries of misrule, and yet forbear, lest you injure interests far greater than any within the sphere of your limited duties, and impede and embarrass by a rash change and innovation that may bring local benefit, the slow but certain march of general improvement. Nothing can keep you right on all these points but constant efforts to add to your knowledge, and accustoming your minds (as I have before urged you) to dwell upon the character of the British power in India, and that of the empire over which it is established. The latter comprehending numerous tribes and nations, with all their various institutions and governments, may truly though metaphorically, be viewed as a vast and ancient fabric, neither without shape nor beauty, but of which many parts are in a dilapidated state, and all more or less soiled or decayed; still it is a whole, and connected in all its parts, the foundations are deep laid, and to the

very summit arch rests upon arch. We are now its possessors, and if we desire to preserve while we improve it, we must make ourselves completely masters of the frame of the structure to its minutest ornaments and defects: nor must we remove the smallest stone till another is ready suited to fill the vacant niche, otherwise we may inadvertently bring a ruin upon our own heads and those of others, on that spot where we too eagerly sought to erect a monument of glory.

(Signed) JOHN MALCOLM.

THE END.

G. Woodfall, Printer, Angel Court, Skinner Street, London.

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ERRATA.

Page 38, *for* Ahmeduceggur *read* Ahmednuggur.

—— 102, *for* Aurengzeeb *read* Aurungzeeb.

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